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RETREAT ADDRESSES

TO

CLERGY

BY THE LATE
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Jonas Pascal Fitzwilliam
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Editorial Note.

This little volume of 'Notes of Addresses given at Various Retreats for the Clergy,' conducted by Mr. Davidson, is published under the strong belief that many priests who had the privilege of being present at one or more of these Retreats will like to have the notes in permanent form. They have been edited from the originals in Mr. Davidson's MS. books, and have been compared with others taken down at the time of delivery by Retreatants, and kindly lent to the editor for the purpose. Such notes have at times been of great help in elucidating the meaning of the originals, which, in places, were very fragmentary, so much so that it would, without them, have been almost impossible to follow up a reference or make plain the meaning, a word or two being sufficient to indicate to Mr. Davidson the line of thought he desired to take, but conveying little guidance to anyone else. The editor, having himself been present at more than one of the Retreats, is sufficiently familiar with Mr. Davidson's style to hope that nothing has been set down that is not in close harmony with his teaching.

The 'Notes' will, doubtless, at times recall the voice and look of one dear to many, and will revive memories of precious hours spent with God under the guidance of a saintly mind. '*He being dead, yet speaketh.*'

H. F. H.

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RETREAT ADDRESSES TO CLERGY

Notes of a Retreat for Clergy at West Malvern, November 3-7, 1884.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

MEETING, as we do, within the Octave of the Festival of All Saints, the subject that seems to suggest itself to us is:

First, our union with our Lord as the true Source of Sanctity.

Secondly, our union with Him as the Power of a consecrated life, especially the life of a priest.

The general subject of our meditations will be taken from the Eucharistic discourse of our Lord in St. John xv., where our union with Him is typified by the parable of the Vine and its Branches.

We will consider this under three main heads, one on each day:

I. On Tuesday: (*a*) Our Lord's relation to the Father; (*b*) our Lord's relation to His Church; (*c*) our Lord's relation to the world.

II. On Wednesday: (*a*) The fruit of the union with our Lord; (*b*) the curse of unfruitfulness; (*c*) the true Source of fruitfulness.

III. On Thursday: (*a*) The special and intimate relation between our Lord and His priests; (*b*) the responsibilities of the priesthood; (*c*) the blessings of the priesthood.

Let us try to bring home to our hearts that with loving desires we have entered into this Retreat as into a season of grace.

First, to await a message from God to our souls: '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.*'

Secondly, to kindle a desire for some special grace, especially conformity to the Will of God: '*He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him.*'

Thirdly, to resolve to consecrate more perfectly in the future our life to His service: '*Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.*' Altogether His.

Address I.

THE RELATION OF OUR LORD TO THE FATHER SYMBOLIZED IN THE PARABLE OF THE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES.

1. Our Lord speaks of Himself in His Humanity. Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood.

2. In the Humanity of Christ lies His subordination to the Father: '*My Father is the Husbandman.*' '*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.*' He was the Vine pruned and tended by the Husbandman, God, His Father.

3. The Humanity of our Lord made fruitful; the source of new regenerate life in His members. He *the True Vine;* we *the branches.* Our life therefore comes from Him: '*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*'

Thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast

out the heathen and planted it: Thou madest room for it: and when it had taken root it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it; and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees.

Let us consider some special points.

I. Our own relation to the Father in Christ. The Fatherhood of God extended to us as members of Christ. '*My Father and your Father.*'

The Fatherhood of God—how full of comfort for us! One of the consolations of Retreat is the temporary Divine shelter from ordinary trials it affords.

This is intensified by the thought that our Lord constantly sought the consolation of being in the Presence of the Father—on the mountain, in the desert, on the lake, etc.

And let us recollect that in our Retreat we may expect the unfolding of God's purpose to our souls. '*The Father Himself loveth you.*' The making clear to us some trial or difficulty we have perhaps failed to understand.

II. We meet together in Retreat as His priests.

Let us consider our special relation to the Father as priests.

(*a*) We are representatives of Christ our Lord. Hence we have a message from the Father to the souls of men. '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*' This is nothing less than that we are called to carry on the mission of Christ in the world.

(*b*) Consider the intercessory character of this revelation. How are we realising our relation as intercessors—in bringing to Him the needs, the sorrows, the sins of our people?

(*c*) Consider ourselves as those appointed by our Lord

to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Think of our preparation—the making ourselves ready for offering the Sacrifice. In what spirit do we approach the altar? Is it with the recollection that we are the representatives of the Lamb—the undefiled Priest? With what purity should we come into that Presence!

(*d*) Again, in its vicarious aspect: '*I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church*'—words of mystery, yet full of meaning, which tell us that in a sense we are called to bear the burden of the sins of those committed to our charge.

How far are we realising this?

'*The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*,' and we are sharing with Him this burden.

III. Consider the special discipline involved in such a relation. Think, again, of the Husbandman and the Vine—the Vine pruned, disciplined by the Husbandman. And thus we are fitted for the work we have to do:

(*a*) 'We are reminded of Him *Who learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*' Hence the necessity in our case of learning obedience by like suffering. '*What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*' It is in this way that saints are created — perfected by discipline and suffering.

(*b*) Think of the special discipline which creates and makes perfect the life of the priest, the discipline which is to perfect the priestly life. '*That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.*' If hereafter we would know Him in the glories of His resurrection, we must know more of the fellowship of His sufferings.

How are we called to suffer with Him?

1. Often by the world's rejection of us. '*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.*'

2. By our sympathy with the sorrows, and, in a certain sense, with the sins of others. If we would suffer with Him we must share others' sorrows, as He did.

3. By the special assaults of the Evil One. Our Lord was constantly subject to special assaults of Satan. So it is that we are not only subject to the ordinary temptations that occur to others, but to special temptations—a special malignity of Satan against the representatives of the Pure and Lowly One. Therefore we must be especially on our guard. '*The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.*'

Let us pray that we may learn to realise more and more the blessings of our sonship and of our priesthood, so that hereafter it may be ours to realise to the full the blessedness of His approving words: '*This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.*'

Address II.

THE RELATION OF OUR LORD TO HIS CHURCH.

This is typified by the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father: '*As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love: even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*' Through the Humanity the union is cemented between God and man, Christ and His members. Here, too, our Lord often refers back from the Humanity to the Godhead. It is also set before us as the pattern for our own life. Hence,

too, there is to be no limit to our obedience and love to God, because our love must be infinite, since it is so united with His—one in Him. When, then, we feel a failing obedience—constantly excusing ourselves from duties, etc. —there must be a failing within of the spiritual life.

The union with Christ is continued by obedience. '*If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love: even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*'

Here follow some special thoughts.

I. The life of Christ in us is the necessary consequence of this union: '*Abide in Me, and I in you.*'

Two terms of union: (1) Our life in Christ; (2) Christ's life in us. In other words, the supernatural life in our mortal bodies. '*I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*'

Dwell especially, because it is too often neglected, on the life of Christ in us. St. Paul and St. John so often dwell on the force of the development of the Divine life in us—St. Paul practically, as is his wont, St. John contemplatively, on the secret forces that compose that Divine life. Try especially to realise this in Retreat, because it is difficult in ordinary life. Yet *Christ liveth in me* should ever be the motto of a Christian priest, to be carried about with us daily in all its humiliating greatness.

II. The Eucharistic channel of this supernatural life. It is especially needful to dwell on this, because we are contemplating one of our Lord's Eucharistic discourses. Think of our Celebrations—their frequency, regularity, devoutness. '*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him.*' The Divine life within us will languish if preparation be careless.

As priests, this special form and means of union with

our Lord should be cherished, that it may become to us an ever-growing participation of Divine life within ourselves.

III. The self-discipline and self-mortification which is needed for the reception of this life. Not merely by reception is the union maintained; there is a further question: Am I fit? How far am I really partaking of that life?

These thoughts bring us face to face with our interior life. Many of us feel that we have too little time for cherishing that life within us, for tending it carefully, for the self-discipline necessary to prepare ourselves. Whether we have much time or not, we must do something. It is a snare of the devil to make us give up the effort necessary to seek the perfecting and strengthening of our spiritual life. We may be sure that God will bless us if we do our best. Fasting, prayer, self-examination, confession, intercessions, subduing the appetites of the flesh, private prayers in the morning, systematic meditation, with all the calmness, the influence, and the atmosphere of heaven which meditation brings — these are exactly what we need. Think over these in Retreat.

The communication of Divine life demands a preparation of the heart. The Divine life is hindered—nay, we receive it not—unless we make ourselves fit. Here is too often the reason why our communions are quite fruitless.

What Divine power will flow into us by the self-discipline and self-purification of our lives if we persevere in them! This will give us purity and self-control and an abiding sense of our union with Christ. '*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*' Remember how for our sakes He disciplined Himself. And His words are: '*If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love:*

even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.'

Thus shall the life of Jesus be made manifest in our bodies. And hereafter—St. John xvii. 22: '*The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One.*'

Address III.

THE RELATION OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD.

We cannot help noticing how our Lord in the closing verses of St. John xv. turns from the subject of His union with His disciples to the hatred and rejection of Himself by the world. '*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.*' A more touching thought still is the hatred of the world in return for the love of Christ—the life of love reciprocated by hatred. In this hatred His servants must share because united with Him.

Yet a consolation and support in the midst of all is the promise: '*When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning*'—the stay and promise of the blessed Comforter, by whom the disciples should prevail and be supported in all trials and persecutions which they should endure.

Notice, then, this double contrast: love and union of His own; hatred of the world. His love of the world; hatred in return.

Here arise some special thoughts.

I. 'The message of love to the world.' Let us remember, again, our office as representatives of our Lord, and that therefore we have a special message of love for the souls of men. And, further, we must carry that message, and continue to carry it, in the face of the hatred of the world. Sometimes this hatred is a sure token of our faithfulness.

There are two forms of this message:

(*a*) Teaching. '*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin.*'

(*b*) The life. '*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*'

These two forms of the message to the world must be reproduced in us—the teaching and the life. He ceased not to teach, amid whatever opposition or persecution. And notice the personal closeness, the personal contact: '*If I had not come and spoken.*' Our teaching must be ceaseless and persevering, though apparently fruitless. There must be personal teaching of individual souls—*e.g.*, St. Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, Zacchæus, etc.

Then, again, the life: '*If I had not done among them the works.*' Here we are shown that the life of a priest must be of a higher standard than that of a layman.

II. The response of the world to our message. Our Lord on various occasions sets before us certain features of the response we are to expect to our message of love to the world.

(*a*) Unpopularity. '*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore*

the world hateth you.' It is a token of faithfulness. Our hearts long for sympathy and appreciation, yet if we always had it we should be lacking one note of our faithfulness.

(*b*) Tribulation. '*These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.*' What faithful priest is there who can contemplate without anguish the state of souls dying on all sides?

(*c*) Ingratitude. '*They hated Me without a cause.*'

(*d*) Obscurity. To be misunderstood and set aside is trying to flesh and blood, yet it is part of our likeness to our Lord. As the Master, so the servant. '*I am among you as He that serveth.*'

III. The Source of strength and comfort. '*When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father.*' Think of *the Comforter;* often meditate on that title of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to be in us the real witness of His power. He in you shall bear witness. Dwell on the thought of the Holy Spirit being the power of witness in us. It is an interesting question how far our natural gifts are to be made use of in our spiritual work. How are they to be utilised? Ever let us recollect that these natural gifts must be guided, corrected, and inspired by the Holy Spirit if they are to be used for spiritual work. They must be raised from the natural to the supernatural by the power of the Spirit. Ever before using a 'natural gift' refer to the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray Him to bless it, correct it, inspire it for His use and His glory. '*It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*' Here is an opportunity for ejaculatory prayer, so as to venture on no

work until we have made sure of the presence and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Think, then, in this Retreat more of the Holy Spirit witnessing in us. Let us be regular and more careful in our devotions to the Holy Spirit. '*I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of Thy righteousness only.*'

Address IV.

THE FRUIT OF THE UNION WITH OUR LORD.

This subject may be viewed under different aspects:

1. Removal of the unfruitful branch. Verse 2: '*Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.*'

2. Decay of the union. Verse 6: '*If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*'

3. The true Source of fruitfulness — His life in us. Verse 4: '*Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.*'

4. The discipline of the fruitful branch. Verses 2 and 8: '*Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.*' '*Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.*'

Here follow special points:

I. The fruit of the union demanded from us by our Lord. God ever demands a certain correspondence on our part with grace given us. More especially in the case of this most wonderful grace of all—the grace of union with Himself—will He look for fruit in us.

Let us ask ourselves: What is the fruit we are bringing forth in correspondence with the grace given to us? What are the true tokens of the energy of the life of Christ in us? One of the greatest condemnations of the Jewish nation was that it was fruitless. '*He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*' Let us apply to ourselves the parable of the Talents; He will come and demand some correspondence with the graces and talents He has bestowed on us.

With this thought let us look back on our past ministry. '*What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*'

How solemn this complaint of our Lord as He comes to look at His vineyard in our hearts! His visits in the Incarnate Life and in the Holy Eucharist; His sending the dew of the Holy Spirit; His warming it with the 'fire of love.' '*Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*'

II. The character of the fruit demanded by our Lord. (*a*) Quantity. Verse 8: '*Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.*' Verse 2: '*Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.*' This should kindle in us more earnestness. There should be no limits to our labours and sacrifices, that we may bring forth more and more fruit.

(*b*) Quality. '*That your fruit should remain.*' Firmness of the fruit—permanent and lasting. Has our fruit this quality of permanency? Will it stand the test of the Last Great Day? Let us beware of human success in spiritual work. Never fix our hearts on this, for it is not the fruit that remains.

How much of self and vainglory is mixed up in all our

works! It is almost impossible wholly to cast out these, yet ever our efforts must be to subdue and conquer such feelings. Work done in such a spirit will not stand the test of time. Yet we must not be discouraged at having such motives, but duly pray to the Holy Spirit to bring them under, that they may be merged in the love of the Father. Ever recollect that the fruit we bring forth is for the glory of the Father, and that the work that will remain must be done in faith, in the love of God, in dependence upon Him, and for His glory. How much in respect of this will depend upon the inward state of our own hearts, —if the union is maintained! if the life of Christ is growing in us!

III. The priesthood of Christ is the true pattern of a faithful priesthood. Our Lord refers to His own example, work, and life. He draws up our hearts and minds from our own efforts to Himself, in Whom we shall find the pattern and power of the priestly life.

His fruitfulness consisted in:

(*a*) The doing of the appointed work. Our unfruitfulness comes often from not doing the appointed work, but work of our own choosing, work that we like.

(*b*) The glorifying of the Father. Let us make it our earnest resolve and earnest prayer that we may never work for ourselves, but for the glory of God the Father.

Then, please God, the Great Day will prove ours to have been a faithful priesthood, and even in this life we shall be '*like trees planted by the waterside, that will bring forth fruit in due season. Our leaf also shall not wither, and look, whatsoever we do, it shall prosper.*'

Address V.

THE CURSE OF UNFRUITFULNESS.

Our Lord refers to the branch that beareth not fruit in verses 2 and 6. Verse 2: '*Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.*' Verse 6: '*If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*'

There is no portion of our subject which requires more careful searching into than the possibility of our unfruitfulness. Recollect—the cause of unfruitfulness is the decay or dissolution of the union with Christ, and more—a special symptom of unfruitfulness is the gradual alienation of the heart from God. So often this takes place in a secret, gradual estrangement. Are there any secret signs of this in our case?

For our warning, may we not think that there rose up before our Lord, as He was in the act of speaking, the recollection of Judas just about to fall? '*Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*' There we have the gradual downward course—the unperceived estrangement; for even to the last moment, Judas seemed to have no idea of the fearful end to which his sin was carrying him.

With regard to the subject of unfruitfulness, notice two points from our Lord's words:

1. The removal of the branch from its place. Verse 2: '*Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.*'

2. The casting out of the branch outside the vineyard.

Verse 6. '*If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*'

We are here forcibly reminded of those solemn words: '*He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*'

Notice, further, four more definite points:

I. Think of the unprofitable servant—unfruitful. We must have noticed how fearfully and severely the sin of unfruitfulness—the sin of doing no good—is spoken of, or referred to, by our Lord in His discourses or parables. What lies so much at the root of unfruitfulness is some unperceived, some secret, unsubdued sin. Self-love in some secret form, self-will, or pride, or self-indulgence, or lust, not being *temperate in all things*, or secret worldliness of heart—these, any one of them, secret though they may be, are sure to make our spiritual life unfruitful in the sight of God. They prevent the free course of grace, the will to say with the Psalmist: '*Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*'

II. A wasted ministry—not a ministry necessarily of any scandal or evil-doing, but simply a wasted ministry. We must, in Retreat, look into the future—to the close of our appointed work. Look on, then, to the end of life. Take, in the spirit of that hour, a retrospect of our life. Think of ourselves, then, weak, perhaps in pain—powers of mind, time, energy failing. In that hour (which God forbid!) how awful to have to look back on a wasted ministry! All that He has given us—grace, wisdom, learning, powers of sympathy, influence for good—all wasted! His voice, His presence, disregarded. All

received wasted—not turned to good account. Think of Him who said: '*I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.* May we reverently and humbly in some measure be able to say this at the close of life.

III. The need of gathering up the fragments that remain. Whatever of life and powers remain, let us gather all up in loving, earnest dedication of the years to come. Even if the past has been almost wasted, still He says: '*Go ye also into the vineyard.*' One day the voice will go forth: '*Call the labourers and give them their hire.*' He calls us, therefore; if in earnest we shall pray hopefully, '*Cast me not away from Thy Presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*'

IV. The power of recovery. This, for our encouragement, may be seen in St. Peter and St. Thomas. Often, in Retreat, a faithful resolution is to atone by earnestness in the future for negligence in the past. How often have we not been ashamed, like St. Peter, to confess Him before men—have doubted Him like St. Thomas? He waits to be gracious to us. He is calling us with His own voice: '*I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.*' The abundance of recovered grace shall exceed that we have lost.

So it was with St. Peter and St. Thomas. God grant the words may be true of us: '*I will satiate the souls of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness.*'

Address VI.

THE TRUE SOURCE OF FRUITFULNESS.

THE Divine life—in other words, the life of Christ in us—is, and must be, the source of fruitfulness. Verse 5: '*I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.*'

This has been referred to before in our first meditation. We will now consider it more fully. We cannot but feel the awfulness of this gift, and the power of the Divine life in us. We must try to realise this. It is an awful reality that *Christ liveth in me.* Here follow four definite points of thought:

I. The discipline of our own interior life. This is one consequence of dwelling on the thought of the Divine life communicated to us. There must be a cleansing of the life. It is helpful in Retreat to contrast the state of the life within, with the appearance of the life without. It is especially necessary for priests—so constantly mixed up with holy things—to remind themselves that while '*man looketh on the outward appearance . . . the Lord looketh on the heart.*' Let us place ourselves in the presence of our Judge; it is helpful to do this at times. The discipline of our own fallen nature is so necessary, because of our three great enemies, the devil, the world, the flesh. Which is to have the mastery, our Lord or one of these? The answer depends upon self-discipline. Are we able to control either one of these as they rise up against us? How helpful to remind ourselves of our blessed Lord's example of self-discipline! He would not go forth to

wrestle with the devil till He had disciplined Himself. How different from ourselves—with a nature prone to evil, rushing into danger and temptation, so often without preparation! How important, as priests, before going forth to teach others, warn others, comfort others, to prepare our hearts for the conflict! How needful for us to follow His Divine example, and to discipline that natural self-love and self-confidence and the worldliness of our hearts, lest the world rule us instead of our ruling the world!

II. The need of a systematic rule of life. We must insist on having for ourselves a system of prayer, study, outward duties. There is often a lack of power, because we are unsystematic—have not a system which requires effort on our part. *Temperate* (self-controlled) *in all things.* Is not this necessary as we bring ourselves face to face with the realities of the supernatural life—Christ *dwelleth in me?*

III. The growth of the life of Christ in us. If the life in us be a reality there must be a growth of that life. It is useful daily to compare our lives with His Divine life. Bring it to bear on the little incidents, trials, provocations of our daily life. See how He demeaned Himself under such circumstances as these, that we may reproduce His lowliness, meekness, silence, gentleness, purity. Try to form in ourselves that peculiar aspect of the priestly life of Christ, so as to become true shepherds of His flock, true teachers, true intercessors, true priests as He was. The daily question: Are we being transformed day by day into the Divine image? Transformation! How this reminds us of the unspeakable importance of regular meditation! For by regularity and constancy of meditation on the Divine character will that character be formed

in us, the reflection of His Divine mind. So will that likeness be impressed on us, and '*we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*'

IV. The power of that life. If we are being transformed, the power of that life will be revealed in us. What are the powers of the life of Christ? Certainly not mere outward energy, or personal success, but, first, the power of self-control; secondly, the power of self-discipline; thirdly, the power of a submitted will. These are not recognised as powers by the world, but they are hidden powers of Christ living in us; not powers of our own, but His, committed to us as His priests. They may not be seen now, but '*hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power.*'

Let us pray to be more conformed to His Divine image, and more worthy of representing Him in the world: '*Such as are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God.*'

Address VII.

THE INTIMATE RELATION BETWEEN OUR LORD AND HIS PRIESTS.

'Not servants, but friends.' Verses 13-16. '*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends.*' '*Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit,*

and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you.'

Here the idea of service passes into that of love. 'Friends' really means 'loved ones,' thus calling us into a closer union with Himself. This title 'friends,' 'loved ones,' was specially given to our Lord's Apostles, and hence to His priests; (see Dr. Westcott's 'Commentary,' where he notes that the personal pronoun '*ye*' occurs nine times, thus emphasizing the point).

Then the term 'chosen' is usually applied by our Lord and the writers in the New Testament to the calling of the Apostles.

This morning we will consider the ground of this intimate relation.

Here follow four special points:

I. The choice or call of Christ. I have chosen you not only to be servants or apostles, but friends. How this thought should kindle our love, and help us to realise what it is to be His loved ones, and so to try to be more worthy of the Divine love!

We are gathered round Him in an especial manner. We form an inner circle round Him. We are different in this respect from others. Dwell in Retreat upon our call to the sacred ministry. If a true call, it is a mark of wondrous love and of His undeserved favour. He has looked upon us and has called us. We were not admitted to the priesthood at random, but for some special purpose —to work for Him. What love! How we have failed to correspond to this love, to realise this special favour!

II. Our unworthiness of His love and call. We pass on, naturally, to think of our unworthiness of the sacred dignity of the priesthood. It must strike us so vividly,

being what we are; yet not so as to make us despair, but to help us to strive to be more worthy hereafter.

III. Our confidence in Him who has called us. '*I know Whom I have believed.*' If our office involves us in difficulties, yet let us ever believe in Him and trust Him, and rest our burden on Him, knowing that He will not fail us. Since He has called us, we may always feel sure that He will help us in whatever difficulty may beset us.

Let us not forget the devotion, the self-sacrifice, this call demands. We must realise this more and more fully. Part of the very blessing of that Divine intimacy is to be able to rejoice in the fact that we are partakers of His sufferings—to *know the fellowship of His sufferings.* So it was with the saints.

IV. The purpose or counsel of the Father towards us. Our Lord so continually refers to the Father in connection with the Apostles. '*It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*' '*All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.*'

Here we are reminded that, as priests, we are admitted to share with our Lord the carrying out of the mission of the Father to mankind. St. John constantly brings before us the fact that it is our Lord's special office to reveal the Father. It is our blessed mission to manifest to the souls to whom we are sent the Father's love; to reveal to the friendless, the homeless, the fatherless in this world that, however sad and desolate here, they have a Father and a home, if only penitent and true. This will give power to our ministry if we can impress it on our own minds.

Remember how He says to each, '*Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.*'

May the words of the Psalmist, which can in their

fullest sense only be referred to the great High Priest Himself, but which may He grant us to have some share in, be of consolation to us: '*I have found David My servant: with My holy oil have I anointed him. My hands shall hold him fast, and My arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not be able to do him violence, the son of wickedness shall not hurt him. . . . He shall call Me, Thou art my Father, my God, and my strong salvation.*'

Address VIII.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES CONNECTED WITH SO DIVINE A FRIENDSHIP.

The Antagonism of the world. Verses 18, 19. '*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*' And our Lord, in other places of Holy Scripture, says that great privileges always involve great responsibilities. '*Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.*'

Here follow three special points.

I. The unworldly life of a priest. '*I have chosen you out of the world*' (verse 19). A priest is placed by his very calling in an unworldly position. For the priest, then, more especially, there is a great sphere for self-denial or abstinence from worldly pleasures, recreations, amusements, which, though innocent in themselves, are yet (because rendering him worldly) harmful.

The question often arises, How far can I use these recreations and the like without forfeiting my priestly character? It is better to put the question the other way: May not these recreations, these pleasures, be made opportunities for self-sacrifice—things to be surrendered for Christ's sake? Not 'How far may we go?' but 'How much may we give up for our Lord's sake?' There is such great power in an unworldly life if we can say, '*We have left all and followed Thee.*'

This example of our devotion is more telling than preaching, more telling than all our counsel to our people. This will avail more to win souls for Christ if our unworldly life shows forth the power of Christ within us, in devotion to Him and self-sacrifice for Him.

II. The responsibility connected with the special work committed to us. Verse 16: '*Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*'

'*I have ordained you.*' We may surely find both consolation and warning in connection with our own work: consolation, because God has placed us and given us that special work to do. It will remedy our human restlessness and desire to change—that feeling of despondency in the disappointments of our work, humbly to recollect that we are working where our Lord has placed us. We are so apt to say, 'I am not fitted for this work.' But we are not always fit judges as to our own fitness for our work; and if sometimes we feel unfitted for it, or it becomes uncongenial to us, these are not sufficient reasons for giving it up. God chooses His instruments, and as time goes on He will reveal to us the reason, as far as it is fitting for us to know, why He has chosen us, and how through all He has led us on. '*What I do thou knowest not now, but*

thou shalt know hereafter.' And let us remember, in the words of our Lord, that ours is also '*the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*'

III. What is the return we are making for the Divine friendship to which He has called us? '*What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?*' The priest should ever carry about with him that question amid joys or disappointments. May we not go forth from our Retreat in this spirit? How shall I go forth to reciprocate His love for me, His mercy, His gentleness with me, His pardoning love?

(*a*) Let us purify ourselves more perfectly from all sin. '*My sin is ever before me.*' Let it ever be our effort to cleanse out the stains of past sin.

(*b*) I will consecrate my life to some special point—some point where I have hitherto been half-hearted. Setting before myself His Divine pattern. '*If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love: even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*' By our devotion, our self-sacrifice, our obedience, after His pattern.

Thus shall we be stirring ourselves up to greater efforts after holiness, and to higher efforts of self-sacrifice, till, like St. Paul, we can say, '*What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*' St. Paul's words and example so wonderfully express the entire devotion and self-sacrifice of the priestly life, who could say, '*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.*'

Let us take to ourselves the words of the Psalmist: '*Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none*

upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.' And then if sorrow, disappointment, weakness, trial come, we shall be able to use as our own the words, '*My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*'

Address IX.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THIS DIVINE FRIENDSHIP.

THIS is particularly emphasized in this chapter by our Blessed Lord—*e.g.*, as this morning we noticed His calling us '*friends*,' not '*servants*'; also in the special intensity with which He speaks of His love. '*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.*' Also in the abiding joy of this relationship: '*These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*' '*My joy!*' The special joy which is distinctly His. What is this? A joy which is sacrifice—a paradoxical joy, yet a joy peculiarly His own (Heb. xii. 2).

And, further, there is another joy—the special access which we have to the Father, which we have as friends of Christ. Verse 16: '*That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you.*'

May we not with truth say with St. Paul, '*All things are your's, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's*'? *Ye are Christ's* in a special sense as *His loved ones.*

Here follow three special points:

I. The joy of self-sacrifice. This is the joy He offers

to His friends. Here is a parting consolation as our Retreat draws to its close. There is always a certain bitterness in sacrifice, but yet beneath it a true joy. So shall we realise the words of our Lord that '*His joy may remain in us, and that our joy may be full*' if our joy is as His joy—the joy of sacrifice.

II. The abiding fruit of all our labours for Him and in Him. '*That ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*' All things wrought in Him will remain. Not the great successes or great achievements in our ministry, but what is wrought in secret and in silence, especially the unnoticed sacrifices and labours of our daily life. Self-sacrifice that is hidden must bring forth fruit that will remain.

We are certain, as life goes on, to have times of sadness and difficulty, to feel a shrinking from self-sacrifice—no joy in it, our hearts overcast. It may be so for a time, but yet every secret anguish borne, every hidden act of self-sacrifice, however small, endured for His sake, will bring its reward. '*In due season we shall reap if we faint not.*' '*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*'

III. The time of blessedness of the priest in the presence of the Lord. When face to face with Him Whom, having not seen, we have loved, Who has illuminated us in this world in Sacraments and mystery, Who will then be revealed in the fullest manner.

The time will come when to each shall be said, '*Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*' May we not even now say with St. Paul, '*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day*'? The time will come when we shall hope to realise those words of Rev. xxii. 3, 4: '*His servants shall serve*

Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.' The time will come when we shall see Him as He is, and—may God grant it!—realise to the full the words of the Psalmist: '*In Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.*'

Notes of a Retreat for Clergy at Cound, Shrewsbury, July 16-20, 1888.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

AGAIN we gather, my brothers, for a season of Retreat, placing ourselves under the special guidance of the Holy Ghost, and in this thought and purpose lies our first reflection:

We are entering within the special sphere of the influences of the Holy Spirit. What need to prepare ourselves for such a Divine fellowship, for the communications which He is about to open with us! There are certain features of preparation and conditions of heart and soul, that we should aim at as we enter a Retreat:

1. Humility, a humble spirit; a feeling of our deep need of godly contrition for sin. '*I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.*'

2. A pure heart, cleansing itself from the defilements that have gathered round it in temptation, or in its conflict with the sin and evil in the world. '*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*'

3. A loving desire for the presence and the comfort of the Spirit of God. '*My soul is athirst for God.*' '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.*' '*Set*

your affection on things above.' And the promised benediction should be remembered, '*Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.*' And again: '*He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He will also hear their cry, and will help them.*'

Seek, then, to secure these three elements of preparation for Retreat, and in proportion as we make the effort there will be a correspondence of the Blessed Spirit with our efforts and desires, for at such a time as this He is waiting to pour upon us His manifold gifts of light and love. '*I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.*' He will have some message of guidance or warning, of special counsel or consolation, some holy inspiration as to our future which shall dwell with us in days yet to come, an inspiration which shall remain with us in self-consecration and devotion, until we have given ourselves entirely to Him Who has called us into this Retreat, so that we may '*live by the faith of the Son of God*'—'*to Him who died for us and rose again.*' Remember the promise: '*They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*'

The subject of our three days' meditation will be founded on St. John xx. 19-24. Few passages of Holy Scripture are of greater moment, or few fuller of deep instructiveness to the priest. The passage deals with the Commission given by our Lord to His Apostles. On the first day we will consider the gift of peace and the vision of the Sacred Wounds, on the second day the Divine mission and the Divine inspiration, and on the third day the distinction between the Paschal and Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost. Let us bear in mind our Lord's promise: '*The Comforter Whom My Father will send in My Name, He shall*

teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'

One word in conclusion: The permanence of a Retreat depends very much on resolutions. Inspirations even of the Holy Spirit Himself are apt to pass away, hence the need of some practical resolutions. Vague resolutions are useless, hence the need of definiteness. The resolution may be divided under two or three heads—*e.g.*, one part to bear upon the devotional life, our private prayers, our celebrations of the Holy Communion; another part to bear upon our practical life, some habit to be overcome, some special grace to be won.

Address I.

St. John xx. 19.

THE MESSAGE OF PEACE.

Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament has this morning stood in the midst of us, and it is certain that no words of His would we desire to have lingering with us more than His greeting, '*Peace be unto you.*'

I. It is the characteristic greeting of our Lord to His Apostles; He taught it to them. And in this greeting what a history is there of conflict, of suffering, of victory! It was His legacy as the hour of His passion drew on, and now again in His resurrection, as His triumph over sin and death has been ratified and assured by the Father.

II. The greeting involves a message to the whole Church, because here the whole Church is represented. It involves also great issues full of deep significance; it speaks to us of the reconciliation with the Father; it assures us of

the triumph of the Son; it involves the earnest and presence of the Holy Ghost by whom peace comes to us. It is a perpetual gift: the words of the Son of Man abide for ever, and He is the source of peace to His Church.

III. It is a personal assurance to the individual, a gift of consolation to each, to ourselves as well as to the Apostles—*e.g.*, to St. Peter after his fall, to St. John after his momentary desertion and weakness, to each who had deserted Him, whatever had been their desertion or frailty or sin. He said to each, '*Peace be unto you.*'

Special Points.

Consider the message of the peace of God to the soul of the priest as one of the fruits of this Retreat.

(*a*) The need may be found in the burden of some sin on the conscience, which longs for the relief of the Divine peace; perhaps as St. Peter's, after a special fall; or as St. John's, after a conscious weakness; or in an old sin not fully repented of.

(*b*) Think of the promise of relief which is made to true penitence. St. Peter had wept bitterly, and our Lord had seen his tears; His loving eye had followed him into his solitude. Most probably at that meeting of our Blessed Lord with the Apostle on the Easter morning St. Peter had confessed his sin and had received absolution, and so later on could say, 'Lord, *Thou knowest* that I love Thee.' *We* have the same promise, the same assurance. '*He showed them His hands and His side*,' from whence flowed the Precious Blood for cleansing and absolution. '*Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.*'

(*c*) Think of the future, the blessedness of a determined

resolution with regard to sin. *There is* the power to bring that sin under—the power of the Holy Ghost, even if we have failed grievously before; and in Retreat we should not only take a solemn retrospect of our lives, but also go forth in thought into the future, strong and of a good courage, knowing that we '*can do all things through Him that strengtheneth*' us.

(*d*) Consider, then, the burden of sin, the promise of relief, the determined resolution and good courage for the future, that with the Psalmist we may have cause to say, '*O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.*'

Address II.

St. John xx. 20 compared with St. Luke xxiv. 39, 40.

THE VISION OF THE SACRED WOUNDS.

St. John, we remember, had very emphatically recorded the piercing of our Lord's side, and quotes the prophecy in Zech. xii. 10. He also noted the double outpouring of the blood and water, and refers to this in his Epistle (1 St. John v. 6). So the Fathers of the Church have seen in this piercing of His sacred side great spiritual mysteries, the cleansing water of Holy Baptism, the precious blood of the Holy Eucharist. St. Augustine speaks of the sacred side as a door from whence the Sacraments flowed forth, and St. Chrysostom as the fountain whence the Sacraments arise.

There are two great spiritual truths corresponding to the two great Sacraments: (1) the cleansing of sin; (2) the communication of Divine life. Both truths may be found in both Sacraments, cleansing and life. But in holy

baptism more especially we note the cleansing from sin, and in the Holy Eucharist the partaking of life.

Consider then the wounds of the Passion visible in His glorified Body, and carry on the thought into the courts of heaven itself, where He still is seen as One who has been slain, speaking to us of memories of His sacrifice preserved, in the midst of His glory.

Special Points.

I. Consider self-mortification as a necessary element in the risen and spiritual life. The need of self-discipline especially in priests, who have to train and discipline the souls of others.

(*a*) On the side of the flesh; its appetites, desires, affections. How perilous is the position of the priest unless self-restrained: how many a priest who has done good work for God has been ruined for want of this self-discipline. '*I keep under my body and bring it into subjection*,' says St. Paul, '*lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*.' Do we carefully observe the fasts of the Church—*e.g.*, Fridays, Vigils, Lent, Embertides? The observance of these is a great help in the disciplining of self.

(*b*) On the side of the world—*e.g.*, amusements, recreation. All things lawful, all things not expedient. Some forms of amusement expedient in one place, but highly inexpedient in another. When we know such to be inexpedient we are bound to make them opportunities of self-denial and self-sacrifice, and thus show forth the power of the Spirit of God over the spirit of the world.

(*c*) But when we speak of self we know too well that self means something more than the flesh, and something more

than the world; we come here upon pride, vainglory, the temptations of the devil. What snares are there here for priests in vainglory and self-seeking! What shall be our safeguard amid the seductions of pride and self-love? *Only self-discipline;* the following our Master's example, *who made Himself of no reputation*, Who denied Himself and subdued self entirely to the will of the Father.

II. Consider the blessedness of self-sacrifice. Are we entirely self-surrendered? We are so in name and profession, *but is it really so?*

(*a*) There is an advantage in the English priesthood in being in touch with the life of the people, but there is a corresponding danger, and it would be foolish to be blind to the fact that it makes the entire self-surrender far more difficult, so mixed up are we with our people's lives and thoughts.

(*b*) It may be we may find ourselves in an uncongenial sphere of work, amidst ingratitude, suspicion, etc. We find it perhaps difficult to persevere in work we do not care for, and we grow restless under it, which destroys the calmness and power of the spiritual life. Here is an opportunity for the sacrifice of self; this puts self-dedication to the test. Here we can show that we are crucifying ourselves for His sake, that we may at the end be able to say, '*I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do*,' not 'which I had chosen for myself.'

(*c*) Or, again, if some special cross is appointed for us, outward in the body or inwardly in the heart, let us embrace it as a blessed opportunity for testing our powers of self-sacrifice. It is but the impress of the pierced hands: '*I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*'

III. Consider, further, the great necessity of cultivating the interior life.

(*a*) It is often our lot to be absorbed in the activity of outward work which takes us away from ourselves and the cherishing of the graces of the inner life. Much in the present day tends to diminish the care we should bestow upon our spiritual life. '*Abide in Me, and I in you*'; these blessed words call us back from the tumults and strife and outward labours in which we have our part to Him, without Whom we can do no spiritual work. All real spiritual fruitfulness must have its source in union with Him Who is our Life.

(*b*) We often need more system and rule in our life. There is in some cases great difficulty in securing time for reading, yet by systematic arrangement of our time much may be done, though but little at a time.

(*c*) Again, we must be most careful of our own personal devotion. The earnestness and even the regularity of our private prayers, how often we have to confess our failure in these, or in meditation or preparation for celebrating the Holy Eucharist! Who shall say what is the loss to our souls for want of this careful preparation, the being unfitted to receive the Life for which we have not made ourselves ready? Let us, then, make it our constant aim to bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, remembering His words Who said: '*If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be.*'

Address III.

St. John xx. 20.

THE VISION OF THE PIERCED SIDE AS APPLIED TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

Notice how the vision establishes the identity of the risen Body: '*Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have*'; and, secondly, how it explains the nature of that risen Body. It is a spiritual body—that is, it remains a body, but with powers of spirit attached to it, in that it is unfettered by conditions of space and time. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body; so in the Holy Eucharist it is not the body of a dead Christ, but the incorruptible Body of the living Christ, that is present. And in St. John vi. 54 our Lord connects this Body with our own resurrection: '*Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*' And, again, in verse 57: '*He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.*' So later, in verse 62, He further connects it with the glorified Body of the Ascension: '*What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?*' '*I am with you alway*,' He said—*i.e.*, in the power of the risen, ascended, and incorruptible Manhood, present before The Throne and on the altars of His Church.

Special Points.

1. The Holy Eucharist and the priestly life. We should try to do our part towards the restoration of the

daily Eucharist. Let us be approximating towards this, or else the English Church will ever compare unfavourably with the Roman and Greek Churches. This is not necessarily a controversial matter, so let us keep it out of controversy if possible. All are agreed that the Holy Eucharist is the distinctive ordinance of the Christian Church.

2. But consider for ourselves personally the communication of the Divine life in the Blessed Sacrament. It is a point of special moment for the priest. Remember the priest's own participation of the life of Christ, till we can realise in ourselves, '*It is not I that live, but Christ liveth in me.*' One great object of the Blessed Sacrament is that the life of Christ may be manifested in us. Day by day this union is to be cemented: '*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him.*' And so let us remember, if our communions are worthy, we must look for Divine characteristics—humility, purity, gentleness, long-suffering, the love of Christ, all of which should be reproduced in ourselves as Christ is formed in us. Should we not at times ask ourselves what are the fruits of our communions? Are the powers of the Divine Mind reproducing themselves in us? Is there a gradual formation in us of that Divine Character? '*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*' Let us remember, further, that here lies all the virtue, power, and divine energy of our ministry, Christ living in us, we reproducing that life in ourselves and giving it forth to others. '*The works that I do shall ye do also.*' '*Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father.*' '*He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*'

3. Think, then, of the preparation of the priest for

frequent communion. What a wondrously purifying and elevating influence in a priest's life should this preparation for frequent communion be!

(*a*) *The self-examination.* We cannot be too careful to cleanse ourselves and mortify our besetting sin, whether it be of the flesh or spirit. *There* is the hindrance that has hitherto prevented our getting full benefit from our communions; so that we must take care to make the tabernacle of our heart ready for the reception of Him Who is to come into it.

(*b*) *Pay special attention to secret sins*, of which at one time we were scarcely conscious, for one sign of progress in the spiritual life is the discovering of hidden faults which God reveals to us by His Spirit. '*Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.*' It should be a serious consideration how a secret sin may have been a blight upon the life; how often it may have taken away the blessing of the presence of the Lord; how often it has been the cause of the weakness and infirmity or the deadness and coldness of our spiritual life—a hindrance, perhaps, to our priesthood and to our ministering to the souls of others. To discover any such sin is a sign of progress, costing us, perhaps, much painfulness, but yet bringing much of sweetness and after-peacefulness. As we find out these hidden sins we are taken up more and more into Him. '*How sweet is Thy mercy, O God!*' We realise the comfort of His invitation: '*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*' '*Ye shall find rest unto your souls; for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*'

(*c*) Should we not make a resolution about carefulness in preparation for Holy Communion? This will elevate our whole life and make our work mighty for Christ. At

least, let us remember the importance of this, and never forget the three requisites of a devout preparation :

(1) A fixed time ; regularity is a necessity.

(2) Avoid routine and formality ; let us make our preparation with the devout and earnest effort of the whole heart.

(3) A deep sense of our own unworthiness, yet also with the feeling, '*Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean*' ; or, in the words of Dr. Pusey's prayer, 'Let not my unworthiness make me forget Thy worthiness, O Lord.'

May one of the fruits of this Retreat be a greater worthiness in our preparation for Communion. '*I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to Thine altar, that I may show the voice of thanksgiving and tell of all Thy wondrous works.*'

Address IV.

St. John xx. 20 (*continued*).

THE JOY OF THE RECOGNITION OF THE LORD.

Consider the joy this recognition brought to St. Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples at Emmaus, to the Apostles fishing on the Sea of Galilee, and also in the passage before us, in the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem. Notice, too, the conditions of this recognition. Our Lord manifested Himself first of all to penitent hearts—*e.g.*, to St. Mary Magdalene and St. Peter ; secondly, to the anxious and sorrowful at Emmaus ; thirdly, to those engaged in meditation and in worship, as in the Upper Chamber, or in the Breaking of Bread ; and fourthly, to those labouring in the

appointed work of life, as to the Apostles on the Lake of Galilee. Each of these manifestations brought their own special joy, and so were the occasion of fulfilling His word: '*I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*'

Special Points.

What are the conditions of joy in the heart of the priest?

(*a*) That joy consists in the recognition of, and the abiding vision of, the Lord after a season of separation from Him, caused, perhaps, by some sin or infirmity. But the condition of this joy of recognition can only be found in true penitence of spirit—penitence for some sin, or for a cold, worldly, slothful, self-indulgent, unloving, unconsecrated, unprogressing life, where is no growth or deepening in the things of God. '*Lovest thou Me?*' He asks of each. What answer can we make? Or is it with reproof He upbraids: '*O sluggish of heart!*'—sluggish in the life of faith, in study, in meditative devotion? Or, again, with a solemn warning: '*Be not faithless, but believing*'—a warning against doubts brought about possibly by a disordered spiritual state. Remember, it is our own penitence, our own contrition which is the true secret of living sympathy with crushed and broken hearts, whether in preaching or in ministering to individual souls under the authority of our Lord's Commission: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*'

(*b*) A further condition is a life of earnest labour in the work appointed for us. There can be no joy to that heart that is not given to earnest labour in the work of His appointment. He does not necessarily require us to be

successful, but He does look for faithfulness; He does not wish us to look too much for results of our labour, but when the morning comes He will reveal Himself as He stands upon the shore, and will reward us in an altogether unexpected and abundant way. Consider, then, the influence of such a life upon the world around us. How great was the influence of our Lord's self-sacrifice upon an unbelieving world! So also, in a measure, with His priests. Our influence will make itself felt not so much by preaching as by self-sacrifice. '*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.*' And oh! the want of power where there is no self-sacrifice; how feeble the life! how little accomplished for God!

(*c*) A third condition is faithful attendance in the sanctuary and at the altar. '*Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.*' Especially He makes Himself known in *the Breaking of Bread.* Let us, then, be very regular in the Daily Offices of the Church, not looking so much for a 'congregation' as looking for the Presence of our Lord. Especially let it be so in our frequent pleading of the Holy Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. '*One thing have I desired of the Lord which I will require: even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple.*' '*Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be alway praising Thee.*' '*Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.*' '*Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.*' So shall we also learn to say: '*Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.*'

Address V.

St. John xx. 21.

THE DIVINE MISSION FOLLOWING UPON THE JOY OF THE RECOGNITION OF THE LORD.

The recognition of the fact that the Lord was risen was in itself a Divine stimulus of energy. It was so certainly with the holy women. '*Go quickly*,' said the angel to them, '*and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.*' Their joy was not to be a matter of selfish satisfaction, but like a living fountain sending forth waters of refreshment for others. And so with us; the joy of the Vision must lead on to energy and activity in the work of the Lord. '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*'

With regard to the text before us, I would refer you to Dr. Westcott's 'Commentary' for the full meaning of the passage. He points out that the perfect tense implies the permanence of the effects of the sending; the Apostles and their successors were to carry on the work of Christ to all the ages, to carry on what He had begun; they were not themselves to inaugurate a new work. And so the power of the Sacraments, absolution, the communication of the gift of the Holy Ghost are the perpetual endowments of the Church, the fulfilment to the Church of the Divine promise, '*Lo, I am with you alway.*'

Notice, also, that in the original the word translated 'hath sent' is ἀπέσταλκε, implying an authoritative send-

ing; whilst the word translated 'send I' is πέμπω, which implies a union between our Lord, the Divine Sender, and those whom He thus sends. Hence His priests, in union with Himself, are to perpetuate the work He came to do.

Special Points.

I. The sacredness of our priesthood in the light of the Divine mission in union with our Lord. The words of the text remind us that our mission as priests is from God Himself, given us through Christ, to carry on with Christ the Father's work; not a work, remember, which we have taken up ourselves, or by the advice of friends, or on account of the dignity of its vocation, but by the call of God. We believed that we were at our ordination 'truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the order and ministry of priesthood,' just as we had previously acknowledged that we trusted we 'were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost' to take upon ourselves the office and ministration of the diaconate.

II. Think of our union with Christ as participators in His Divine mission. We are fellow-workers together with Him. *We are ambassadors for Christ.* According, then, to the Apostle's teaching, it is a mission to be fulfilled in union with our Lord. This should suggest anxious inquiry to us. Take four tests and apply them to yourselves, and thus test your own work as to whether it is work in union with our Lord:

(*a*) The *entire* dedication to the work, the absolute surrender to Him of self—body, soul, and spirit.

(*b*) *Devotion to our own special sphere of work.* Are we contented to be where God has placed us? Beware, brethren, of restlessness, of a desire for change of scene,

and the like. How narrow was the sphere of work assigned to our Lord by the Father! what lowly places He frequented! how ready He was to spend His time for one individual!—*e.g.*, for Nicodemus, the woman of Sychar, Zacchæus, St. Mary Magdalene; how ready to bless little children, and to allow Himself to be hindered by them, as the Apostles thought.

(*c*) *Conformity of will with the Divine Will.* '*Not my will, but Thine be done.*' Want of this spirit of submission will frustrate and make void all our work for God; but, on the other hand, conformity to His Will is the real essence of Divine power in the work we have to do.

(*d*) *The seeking of the glory of God as the one aim of our ministry.* '*I seek not Mine Own glory*'—an evidence, this, advanced by Himself as to the truth of His mission. It must be the great aim of our ministry, if we would realise our union with our Lord. Hard, difficult though it is, we must be drawing nearer to it. Do not be discouraged by its greatness. There are two ways in which we may approximate towards it: (1) By the gradual subdual of self—a continual daily discipline—so that when the selfish aim or motive presents itself we may be able to trample it under foot, and throw it aside, even as He '*made Himself of no reputation.*' (2) We must look for this high aim in proportion as the life of Christ is reproduced in us; so shall we seek the Father's glory, and not our own. Oh, may we make it our aim by devotion, by communion, by gifts of grace, by sanctification of the Spirit to develop His own character within us. Our mind is to be His mind, our will His will, our love His love. How blessed in the end, when God calls us, if, after our own feeble measure, but by His grace and mercy, we are able to make our own

His solemn words of retrospect, as He looked back upon the work of His ministry: '*I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.*'

Address VI.

St. John xx. 22.

THE DIVINE MISSION FOLLOWED BY THE DIVINE INSPIRATION.

The words of the text carry us back in thought to the birthday of our priestly life, the day on which we were set apart for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God. Let us think of that day—the day that meant so much to each one of us individually. How often does St. Paul go back in thought to his call by God to the Apostleship! '*He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*' '*I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.*' '*His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.*' Notice the characteristics of St. Paul—his humility, his confidence in Divine grace, or, once more, his entire and perfect devotion. '*Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.*'

Notice the act of our Lord breathing on His Apostles, and compare '*The Lord God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life.*' Here, again, in the upper room, the spiritual life of a re-created humanity is breathed into man's soul. The Divine inspiration is a perpetual endowment of the Church and priesthood for all ages, so that, in the person of His representative, it is the Person of the

Son of Man Who baptizes, Who absolves, Who offers the Holy Eucharist.

Notice, too, the difference between the Paschal gift of the Holy Ghost and the Pentecostal gift of the same Holy Spirit. Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον without the article (St. John xx. 22). This gift is a preparation, a kind of instalment of the great gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. The Paschal gift is a gift for quickening spiritual humanity, the Pentecostal gift is a full endowment of the Spirit, or, as Godet puts it, 'the Paschal gift insures the power of resurrection; the Pentecostal gift the power of ascension.'

Special Points.

I. The presence or fellowship of the Holy Ghost with us in our priestly life and work. This thought is full of consolation. The Holy Ghost has been given to us by our Lord Himself. Consider, then, in this light, our natural gifts and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Natural gifts are, of course, gifts from God, but we do, and may, speak of them as natural gifts. What use is a priest to make of these natural gifts? They are most certainly to be employed in the Master's service, for we are to be faithful in that which is least as well as in that which is much. But we must take care that these natural gifts are not exercised in themselves and alone. They must be brought into subordination to the powers of the Holy Ghost, or else they will become hindrances and impediments to our work. They need to be inspired by the same Holy Ghost before they are employed in spiritual work. How often we find a natural gift running into excess—a man using a natural gift out of all proportion to other gifts! So, again, an unsanctified natural gift

puffs up its possessor, fostering the pride that is within us. Ever should we try to seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost in the use of the natural gifts God has bestowed upon us. Here is an opportunity for ejaculatory prayer, so that we may realise our Lord's words, '*It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*'

II. Consider the special gifts of the Holy Ghost which are given to us—'*the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.*'

(*a*) The gift of power. '*Ye shall receive power.*' '*Out of weakness were made strong.*' '*When I am weak, then am I strong.*' For often, when outwardly weak, God is working by us.

(*b*) The gift of love. How important that we should seek to be inspired with a Divine love for souls. What an object to pray for—that we may be kindled with the love of Jesus for the souls of others!

(*c*) The gift of a sound mind—'a right judgment in all things.' (1) It implies a right judgment in spiritual controversies; a judgment not by bias, nor by the prejudice of our own minds, but under the calm guidance of the Holy Ghost. (2) It implies a growing illumination in the mysteries of the faith, that we may see the wondrous things of God in His Word as we are being educated for a more perfect knowledge in a more perfect day. (3) It implies the discernment of spirits, the discernment of the secret need of souls. Never let us, in ministering to the needs of others, trust only to our own experience or powers of sympathy, or tact, but let us make a point of never failing to seek for guidance from the Holy Ghost.

How wonderfully these make a harmony of gifts, making our mind like the mind of Christ! *We* may have

one gift, but *Christ* has *all* gifts, and as we grow in Christ we shall have these gifts breathed into us more and more by the Divine Spirit.

Does not this suggest to us how careful we ought to be in devotion to the Person of the Holy Ghost? Might we not make it a rule once a day, about 9 a.m., to pray directly to the Holy Ghost—*e.g.*, to use the *Veni Creator*, with special prayer for this Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. 'If you make it a rule to say sincerely the first verse of the Ordination Hymn (*Veni Creator*) it will do more for you than any prayer I know, except the Lord's Prayer,' was the advice given to his ordination candidates by a former Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Hamilton). '*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.*' '*When Thou lettest Thy breath go forth, they shall be made, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.*'

Address VII.

St. John, xx. 22, 23.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE FULLER REVELATION OF PENTECOST.

I. Consider this as the great gift of the Father. '*I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.*' As the Father gave the Son, *that we might live through Him*, so also He gave His Spirit, that in the Spirit the Son might abide with us for ever. '*We have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*' '*Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.*'

II. Contrast the nature of the two gifts: the gift of the Son—God manifest in the flesh, a manifestation to the outward sense; and the gift of the Spirit—God manifest in the Spirit, a manifestation to the inner spirit of man. Thus the Holy Spirit witnesses to the completeness of the manifestations of God without and within. The outward manifestation is temporary: '*It is expedient for you that I go away.*' The inward and spiritual is an abiding manifestation—'*another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.*' Not that the presence of the Spirit was to be a substitute for the presence of the Son, but rather one great office of the Holy Ghost is to preserve the presence of the Son with His Church to the end. '*I depart*' (in a bodily natural presence), '*I am with you alway*' (in My spiritual and Divine Manhood)—and this by the power of the Holy Ghost. So, when speaking of the Holy Ghost, our Lord says, '*I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you,*' and St. John assures us, '*We know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us.*'

Special Points.

I. The manifestation of God to our spirit, not outwardly in the flesh, but inwardly in the Spirit. '*The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me.*' And we ask, as the Apostles asked, '*Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*' The answer is found in the preceding words, '*He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.*'

II. The spirit of man in our complex nature has its own special needs, and these are specially supplied by the Holy

Spirit. Take, *e.g.*, the condition of doubt or perplexity. (N.B.—The loss of the Spirit through sin often involves unbelief.) How is this to be remedied? It is part of the office of the Holy Ghost to enlighten our minds by the light of His truth. He reveals these things unto us by His Spirit. If by sin we have lost the presence of the Spirit, it may well be that His light has been withdrawn. Cherish, then, that Divine gift by the subdual of sin; cherish the indwelling of the Spirit, and we shall find '*the Lord thy God shall make thy darkness to be light.*' '*He shall guide you into all truth.*' Do not consolations and holy desires come from the Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us?

III. The spiritual manifestation—*i.e.*, the manifestation to our spirit is described by our Lord as an indwelling. '*We will come unto Him, and make Our abode with Him.*' Nothing less than this: '*God dwelleth in us.*' And this Presence implies a personal union with our Lord ('*ye in Me and I in you*') in such a way that we are partakers of the light and life of the Divine Nature. '*Because I live ye shall live also.*' '*In Thy light shall we see light.*'

IV. But our Lord implies that there is a condition necessary for this manifestation—the spirit of love. '*If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.*' A simple thought, but how much it involves! How often we may lose the manifestation by want of love! The two elements of love are here implied—love to God and love to man; for, as St. John says, '*Whoso loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?*' How many are the barriers which may interpose themselves between the soul and a true love of man!—selfishness, envy, detraction, want of sympathy

and interest in others! Have we experienced in ourselves any such hindrance to the going forth of love? We must call to mind, should it be so, that if we have not put away these unloving dispositions we are forfeiting our right to the manifestation of the Spirit, we are losing (perhaps have lost) the manifestation of God to our souls, the abiding presence of God with us.

And, further, what is 'the love of God?' Is it not seen in the keeping of His commandments, in obedience to, and conformity with, His Divine will and word—a *growing* conformity? We should do well to examine ourselves during our Retreat on this point. Is there in me any rebelliousness, any murmuring, any discontent, any open or secret opposition to God's will? or is there loving, trustful submission? '*Not My will, but Thine be done.*' The absence of this spirit of loving submission is often the secret of darkness, dryness, and stagnation in the life of grace. This want of a conformed will drives away the light of God, and without the light of His countenance we cannot be whole. '*He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.*' Again: '*God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*' '*I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit*'—*i.e.*, with one who lives in quiet, humble submission to Me. Without this there will be no light, no love, no growth. But with this submissive love shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit, we may hope that He will come and dwell with us and manifest Himself to us more and more, and that He will say to our souls in the words of the Psalmist, '*This shall be my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*' And we may respond: '*With Thee, O Lord, is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light.*'

Address VIII.

St. John xx. 22, 23 (*continued*).

THE WORK AND OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST IN RELATION TO THE SON.

Through the power of the Holy Ghost the Son abides for ever with the Church, in the truth of His Divine Manhood, fulfilling His own words: '*Lo, I am with you alway.*' But in the vision of the Spirit the Church beholds from age to age the Son of Man *walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks.* Hence, again, the Holy Spirit's mission is not a substitute for the mission of the Son, but in reality a development, a completion of it, insuring or bringing to pass the spiritual and abiding Presence of the Son: '*He shall testify of Me.*' '*He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.*' Dwell on this thought, and draw it out. Our Blessed Lord speaks always of the double Presence—His own and that of the Spirit: '*He shall abide with you for ever*'; '*I am with you alway*'; '*He shall give you another Comforter*'; '*I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*'

Further, our Lord's spiritual Presence, as effected by the Holy Ghost, is the living power of the Sacraments.

I. Absolution. This power granted in connection of the gift of the Holy Ghost: '*Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted.*' Notice our Lord's words: '*The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.*' So absolution is an exercise of the power of the Son of Man, present with His Church, by the Holy Ghost, and acting through His ministers. '*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.*' The priest absolves in the Person

of Christ, Who is present by the power of the Holy Ghost: '*Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*'

II. The Holy Eucharist. In like manner the Real Presence of our Lord is brought to pass by the Holy Ghost. (N.B.—It was when instituting the Blessed Sacrament that our Lord promised the Holy Ghost.) The promise of the Holy Ghost is interwoven with the Institution, and His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament is brought about by the Holy Ghost. '*I will come to you*' in the power of the Comforter. Specially notice the old Liturgical address to the Holy Ghost, before the prayer of consecration, 'Come, O Holy Spirit, make this bread the Body,' etc.

Special Points.

Concentrate your thoughts on this: the priest the representative of the invisible Lord. What a dignity, my brothers! what a responsibility! The Son of Man exercises His power in Heaven, and through us His priests on earth. Notice some aspects of this great office:

I. The priest in absolution. There is great need to bear in mind that we exercise *His* power, *not our own.* With what humility and continual distrust of self should we exercise this ministry, with what care and caution, with what prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit, lest we misrepresent Him, lest we forgive those whom He has not forgiven, or lest *we make him sad whom God has not made sad!* What intense and anxious care is needed in dealing with such a power: '*Not I, but Christ . . . in me!*'

II. The priest in the ministry of the Word. Here, perhaps, we are still more apt to forget that it is not we that speak: '*We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*' Let us constantly strive to subdue all self-seeking

and self-pleasing motives which harass us in this work. Let us often ask ourselves how much of the labour and effort spent upon our sermons is spent for the glory of God. Beware lest a desire to succeed be a desire for self-gratification. This would be sacrilege indeed. Let us put ourselves continually under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and make it a rule, both in preparation and in preaching, never to begin or continue without at least an ejaculatory prayer that we may speak for Him. This will be the real secret of the success of our preaching if it comes to souls as an arrow of God with the power and penetrating virtue of the Holy Ghost. '*Thou shalt speak My words unto them.*' '*It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*'

III. The priest in celebrating. Here especially we are the representatives of the Master, the great High Priest; for, as we know, we are called upon to offer in union with Him the Blessed Sacrament before the Father in the holy sacrifice of the altar. Here, more than anywhere else, we represent the great High Priest. Let us ever have before us, as one special requisite, the fact that more and more the characteristics of the great High Priest should be reproduced in us—*e.g.*, self-renunciation—'*He gave Himself;*' purity—'*offered Himself without spot;*' love for the souls of men—'*Who loved me, and gave Himself for me,*' thus making true in our life the Apostle's words: '*Not I, but Christ liveth in me.*' Let this be stamped on every office of our ministry, and be a true description of our life as priests of God. Let us pray as we think over the responsibility and dignity of our priesthood: '*Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and Thy saints sing with joyfulness. For Thy servant David's sake turn not away the presence of Thine Anointed.*'

Address IX.

St. John xx. 22, 23 (*continued*).

PERSONAL CONSECRATION WROUGHT BY THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Notice how the presence of the Holy Ghost is defined and distinguished in the great promise of our Lord. It is interesting to note that in the original three different prepositions are used to express it (see St. John xiv. 16, 17).

I. μέτα, 'with you,' implying the general idea of *fellowship* of the Holy Ghost.

II. πάρα, 'by you' or 'among you,' implying the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Body—in the Church corporately.

III. ἐν, 'in you,' the personal indwelling.

To-night in our present meditation we are concerned with the last, 'in you.'

Special Points.

Christ living in the priest, as St. Paul says: '*That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*' This is wrought by the Holy Ghost—this is the great personal consecration: '*Not I, but Christ liveth in me.*' The putting aside of self and the reproduction of the life of Christ is to be the result in us of this consecration: '*Christ liveth in me.*'

Consider certain features of the life of Christ which are to be reproduced in us.

I. The life of Christ in its self-renunciation: '*I am*

crucified with Christ,' '*for the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord; it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord*.'

(*a*) In our unsparing toil for Him, Who was continually giving Himself to His work.

(*b*) In His unselfish life. As representatives of Christ we are bound to pour out our lives as a sacrifice for others, even to bear the sins of others; not, of course, in an ordinary way, but in realising the bitterness of others' sins—their carelessnesses, their recklessnesses, their relapses.

(*c*) In the accepted cross: '*The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*' We shall have our cup which we shall have to drink, some cross to bear after Him; let us see that we accept it, whatever it be, whether disappointment or a hard life, loneliness, opposition, the ingratitude of others, weakness, or some sad, secret burden. As we accept our cross so we shall be made like unto our Lord. Here will be a true source for us of Divine joy: '*Ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*.'

(*d*) Its perfect obedience: '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work*.' Contentment with our appointed lot or work. Let this be reproduced in us: '*I am content to do it*.' We might, as it were, take these words about with us and daily make them our own, to check self-will and restless self-seekings: '*I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do*.' Remember, too, the dignity even of the lowest work if it be for God. Carefulness is necessary even in what seem to be little and apparently trifling works: '*faithful in that which is least*'; works that do not come before man's

notice, but which are to be done beneath the eye of the Son of God, Whose every act in His lowly life was perfect.

(*e*) The motives of our work must be purified: '*I do always those things that please Him.*' This will elevate our whole character; our wills will be lifted into union with the Divine will, His glory will be our one aim: '*I seek not mine own glory.*' '*He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true.*'

II. An ever-deepening union with the Person of our Lord. This is the source of all true life: '*He that abideth in Me and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*' But there can be no deep union with Him without great carefulness in personal devotion, especially in the early morning, sanctifying all; and in regular meditation, contemplating the Divine example, looking at *things unseen.* We cannot reproduce the life of Christ or reach out towards Him as the pattern of our life apart from this. It is meditation on the characteristics and the Divine graces of that life that will work in us that change to which St. Paul refers: '*Changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*'

III. Devout and constant communion. We are not called only to be followers of an example, but to be partakers of a life. And our life must be fed and nourished by the life of the Son of God by means of the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood. Here we receive accesses of Divine life, and are made partakers of the Divine nature: '*Because I live ye shall live also.*' If our communions are really devout, blessed are we. We *are* being changed more and more into His image; Christ *is* being formed in us. And so we may look on from our

communions to the last day, when we shall be completely conformed to the holiness of the sinless Son of Man, and say: '*When I wake up after Thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it.*'

As, then, we pass from the Mount of Retreat to the level of our daily life, are we not resolved to go back more faithful representatives of the great High Priest, showing forth in our lives the sacrifice, the Divine life, the holy obedience of Christ, looking forward to His promise: '*Where I am there shall also My servant be.*'

Notes of Addresses given at a Retreat for Clergy at Cuddesdon and subsequently at Bovey Tracey, 1888.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

'*Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile.*' It is the Master's familiar voice that we hear once again, my brothers, calling us to this season of retirement and rest, and for this very reason we place ourselves now under the special guidance of God the Holy Ghost. Let us bear this in mind, for we are here not only or merely to commune with our own hearts, but to seek the special fellowship of the Holy Spirit, to be with God as well as with ourselves. Hence another thought must be present with us also: it must be borne in upon us that our Divine Lord has had some special purpose in calling us into this Retreat, and we shall find He has for us either (1) a warning of some secret spiritual danger; or (2) some counsel in perplexity; or (3) an inspiration for the future of our life or our work; or (4) a message of comfort in some pressing trial. Let our hearts respond to His loving purpose for us. '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.*'

One thought more. It will be helpful to concentrate our thoughts on some special subject so as not to lose our-

selves amid the many wide and varied spheres of spiritual truth which open out to us at such a time, but to seek definiteness by unity of subject. And the subject I propose to suggest to you is one which should be especially helpful to us priests—some of the characteristics of the life and ministry of St. Paul. I shall take it in three main divisions, one on each day of Retreat: (1) His personal character; (2) his Apostolic and priestly work; (3) his sacramental life shown forth in his life of union with Christ. And then under these three divisions we will consider our life as priests in relation (1) to ourselves, (2) to others, (3) to God. It is, let me say, a matter of great importance in the spiritual life to observe the due proportions of this threefold relation; for instance, self-introspection is necessary, but it must be harmonised and balanced by the further consideration of life in relation to others and in relation to God. There is a danger of too absorbing self-reflection, as St. Paul knew: '*Yea, I judge not mine own self, but He that judgeth me is the Lord.*' On the other hand, there is the danger of forgetting self: '*Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O, cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.*' Or, again, we may look on our life in its relation to outward work: '*Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, have we not . . . in Thy Name done many wonderful works?*' St. Paul would bid each, '*Take heed to thyself.*'

Further, consider for a moment the purpose of the resolutions that should be the outcome of a Retreat. They may generally be regarded as of two kinds: (1) With regard to the devotional life between our self and God; and (2) with regard to the practical daily life as it affects ourself and others. Our resolution should be simple and definite: (*a*) Dealing with our own personal devotions, and

(*b*) formed in respect of some special habit or danger or tendency coming before us in our outward ministry, or with regard to some special grace needed. May He be with us Who alone can guide us into all truth, speaking His own message to each soul, possessing us with His own peace. '*He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool: even as the drops that water the earth.*'

Address I.

RETROSPECT OF ST. PAUL'S LIFE.

THE figure of St. Paul is to be our study in this Retreat; his strong individuality is so marked a feature that the lessons of his life are on this account the more pointed and forcible. The subject of our meditations to-day will centre round the personal character of the blessed Apostle, as formed by nature and by grace.

Now, one remarkable point as we trace St. Paul's self-portraiture in his Epistles, great and noble as the figure appears, is this: the ever-recurring sense of his own unworthiness. It was, no doubt, the effect and the development of grace. Let us carefully consider this, for it is the more noteworthy as it is combined with a high sense of the dignity of his office, the prerogatives of his priesthood, and the power of grace as transforming and elevating his whole life; and, still more, it stands out in very striking contrast with the self-sufficiency of his unconverted life. Take, for instance:

I. His many references to his early life of ignorance and unbelief: '*The chief of sinners*': '*less than the least of*

all saints': '*who am not meet to be called an Apostle*': '*who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.*'

II. Notice, further, the sense of indwelling sin in his new life: '*In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*' '*O wretched man that I am!*' '*I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*'

III. Notice, again, the entire freedom from morbid self-depreciation. Many souls mar or even neutralise their humility by the morbidness of self-contempt. Especially is this so in the case of priests, but it is a subtle form of pride. There is nothing of this about St. Paul. '*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*'

IV. Once more: the keen consciousness of the greatness of the love of Christ. This is perhaps the predominating element in the Apostle's character. It took its rise in the very first moments of his conversion, when he calls to mind his previous hatred, his bitterness, his persecution of Jesus and His followers. How unworthy was he of any love or any favour! and yet he, even he, had experienced a love passing knowledge, which had called him, and forgiven him, and transformed him. It was the love of Jesus, of Him Whom he had so hated. How he loves to dwell on the thought—we might almost say he passionately dwells on it—in his writings: '*He loved me and gave Himself for me.*' '*The love of Christ constraineth us*': '*that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.*'

Special Points.

The Apostle's frequently renewed retrospect of his life. How often he goes back in thought to his early years and his former life! and what more suitable exercise is there for us than this at the beginning of a Retreat? Begin, then, your Retreat with looking back upon your past years. And in that retrospect, upon what points will the soul fix and dwell? It may be well to follow the order suggested by the Apostle's own retrospect.

I. The remembrance of former sins, assuming, no doubt, different forms of remembrance for each. '*The heart knoweth his own bitterness.*'

(*a*) Some will have to deplore a general indifference, times of ignorance, indifference, veiled unbelief. '*I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*'

(*b*) Or it may be there is a special period in the life to be remembered—a waste, desolate track lying apart from our present experiences, but which forms from time to time the subject of serious thought and repentance. '*I persecuted*' (at a certain period) '*the Church of Christ.*'

(*c*) Or, again, there may be some besetting and dominant sin which has access through all points of life in various forms—*e.g.*, pride, self-will, lust. We are conscious of that sin. '*Against Thee only have I sinned.*' And we come seeking deliverance: '*According to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences.*'

II. Again, there may be a sense of present indwelling evil, the law of the members yet remaining and warring against the law of the mind. We ought in our retrospect to examine ourselves with regard to this:

(*a*) On the side of the world: worldly motives.

(*b*) On the side of the flesh: evil concupiscence.

(*c*) On the side of self: vainglory; insincere and mixed motives.

'*In me dwelleth no good thing.*' '*O wretched man that I am!*' '*God be merciful to me a sinner.*'

III. Consider, further, the hope and resolve for the future. St. Paul was never morbid; he puts aside despondency and rises from the sense of sin to overcome sin. And a Retreat is a season of resolve—a resolve to confess sin, to forsake sin, to subdue sin. The future is in our power, and in this way we may make the future bright and glorious. But there are three points which we must notice: (*a*) Guard against self-excuse, the covering up of sin, the hardening and the stifling of conscience. '*Be sure your sin will find you out.*' And it is certain, if in no other way at least in this, to discover itself as a clog and a weight hindering all prayer and the work of grace in the soul. (*b*) Avoid, on the other hand, despondency, for this is the very snare of Satan; it paralyses energy. '*We are not ignorant of his devices.*' (*c*) Be sure of the power and love of Christ. This was St. Paul's great confidence: '*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*' '*The love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*' '*We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*': '*forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before*': '*I called mine own ways to remembrance, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.*'

Address II.

SELF-DEDICATION.

Let us this afternoon, dwelling still on the personal character of the Apostle, take notice of another feature which presents itself in marked and striking relief—his thoroughness. This is a natural characteristic. It was manifest in the days of his ignorance and unbelief; it was taken up, purified and enlightened by grace, into his converted life. As a persecutor he was thorough, as an Apostle and saint he was thorough, the thoroughness having become transformed in aim, and object, and sphere of action. We may notice three aspects of his thoroughness from three distinct points of view.

I. In the record of his conversion. He is careful to record his *manner of life* immediately preceding this in more places than one. He calls attention to his thorough hatred and persecution of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth: '*Breathing out threatenings and slaughter*,' '*haling men and women, committing them to prison*,' sparing neither age nor sex. But, immediately he was converted, straightway he preached '*Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God*,' throwing himself thoroughly into the new life.

II. In the whole ideal of the Apostolic life and its spiritual realities. '*What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ.*' His entire self-devotion: '*I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*' '*To me to live is Christ.*'

III. In the unceasing activity of that life. St. Paul grounds on this thorough devotedness in labour the proof

of his true Apostleship in reply to his adversaries: '*Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*' So not only in controversy, but when pointing to the proofs of a true call, he appeals to this unceasing and devoted labour and entire sacrifice for Christ: '*In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God—in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings.*' In all these we see the great feature of thoroughness stamped upon the character of St. Paul.

Special Point: The Self-Dedication of the Priest.

I. Here is a weak point in the English priesthood. We have, for the most part, learning, position, influence, refinement, we are in touch with our people; and all these are matters to be sincerely thankful for. But the entireness of self-dedication is sometimes wanting. We have a multiplicity of interests—social, domestic, political ties—all right in their place, but sometimes too absorbing in our English life. Do we not need to rise to the Apostolic standard as enunciated by our Lord Himself, which is referred to in the Gospel for the Festival of the Conversion of St. Paul?—'*Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*'

II. Self-dedication to the priesthood is not necessarily narrowing. St. Paul's own case is a witness in point. What mind more large, what activities more wide, what views more comprehensive than his? And yet he was so

wholly devoted and dedicated to Christ alone. '*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.*' No. This self-dedication is not narrowing; it concentrates the powers both of mind and heart, and by thus concentrating them makes them yet more powerful. Self-dedication, by its simplicity and directness, inspires a man to be more faithful in working, more embracing in sympathy, living only for Christ, yet becoming '*all things to all men*' in the extent and thoroughness of his sympathies.

III. Consider the example of our Master. The self-devotion of Christ, the great Pattern, was always present to the mind of St. Paul. '*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*' '*The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Which died for them and rose again.*' '*He loved me, and gave Himself for me.*'

IV. Consider, further, some tests of self-dedication.

(*a*) The consciousness of the Divine call to the priesthood. As our Lord Jesus Christ was content to do the work assigned to Him by God in the world, so St. Paul was inspired to do the work given to him: '*The glorious Gospel of the blessed God . . . committed to my trust;*' '*Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*'

(*b*) The call to a special work. 'Not only I have chosen you, but I have placed you, assigned you a special position' (see 1 Tim. i. 12, in the Greek). And in that assigned position the Apostle could say, '*I know . . . both*

how to abound and to suffer need.' And, living only for Christ, he could say, '*I am made all things to all men.*' So also, whatever may be our own case, or our own assigned position, with its trials, its uncongeniality, its obscurity, its unappreciation, thoroughness must be characteristic of our work in it. '*I come to do Thy will, O God, I am content to do it.*' With the Apostle let us try to say, '*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*'

(*c*) A particular cross, to be borne patiently for Christ: '*a thorn in the flesh,*' as in the case of St. Paul; some form of bodily weakness, or depression of spirits, or failure in results—all these in a faithful priest may be used as discipline to conform us to the Divine Pattern, and as a means of increasing a thorough self-dedication. '*Let him take up his cross, and follow Me.*' How marvellously realised by the blessed Apostle! '*I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.*' Or, again, '*I . . . fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church.*'

Let us, with God's help, apply these points to our own experience, and by them test the thoroughness of the self-dedication of our own priesthood and of our own selves to Him Who has chosen and has placed us in the ministry of His Church. May it be ours to affirm with the Psalmist, '*With my whole heart have I sought Thee*'; and, again, '*Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.*'

Address III.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

Our meditation will lead us to-night to consider another feature in the Apostle's character connected with his self-dedication—viz., his self-discipline. If love, the love of Christ, was the great motive of his self-dedication, that which gave power and fixity and permanence to his dedicated life was his subdual or discipline of self. Let us contemplate this, not only on account of the prominent place it holds in St. Paul's method of life, but because of its vast importance to us as priests, as the sure basis and indispensable condition of our own consecrated life. It is easy to recall many aspects or phases of this self-discipline in St. Paul's Epistles, and the Epistles give us a photograph of his character. Let us take three instances and gather special lessons from each.

I. The picture of the inward struggle. Here is unfolded for us a little of his own inward life; he refers, for instance, to the law in his members in constant variance with the law in his mind, or to the gradual but difficult subdual of the flesh to the spirit, and refers to its working in himself, in the mortifying through the spirit the deeds of the body.

II. Or look at another phase of his self-discipline—the control over circumstances and over personal feeling.

(*a*) Things lawful abandoned if not expedient, enabling him to maintain a perfect independence in the circumstances of his life. I will not be brought under the power of any.

(*b*) Edification of others consulted before his own per-

sonal feelings: '*If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*'

III. Or another: the order and rule of his life. We can see that, as a matter of discipline, his life was definitely and carefully regulated. In 1 Cor. ix. he refers to his own practice of regular self-discipline.

(*a*) His system and rule—regularity of life. '*I therefore so run not as uncertainly.*'

(*b*) Definiteness of aim: '*So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.*'

(*c*) Self-mortification: '*I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.*'

Just as for athletes who would be successful in racing or boxing or what not, so 'in all holy competition moral discipline prepares for moral energy in the spiritual encounter' (*vide* 'Speaker's Commentary,' *in loc.*).

Special Point: The Self-discipline of the Priest.

Self-discipline is a necessary element in all Christian lives, but especially so in the life of a priest, a part of whose duty it is to teach and discipline others. Let us then with God's help consider this carefully.

I. The need of the culture of the interior life. How difficult this is in the midst of a busy life!

(*a*) The tendency of the age is, we know full well, towards outward activity rather than towards self-communing.

(*b*) The multiplicity of avocations in a priest's life. And we have to contrast with this our Lord's long season of retirement at Nazareth, and, again, the fast of forty days in the wilderness. And, again, St. Paul's own

example in this respect—his Retreat in Arabia. '*Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me: but I went into Arabia.*' So our occasional Retreats should be looked upon not as merely isolated seasons, but as involving the principle of regular retirement from outward things, not merely as an isolated opportunity for self-communing, but as being a special opportunity for that which is already a settled habit of the life.

(*c*) Regulation of life. By order and system much may be done; time for reading, for study, for devotion may be secured by system even in the busiest outward life. St. Paul's maxim—or we might perhaps call it St. Paul's rule of self-culture—for the priest (he gives it to St. Timothy and to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus) is, '*Take heed to thyself*'; '*Take heed unto yourselves.*'

II. The rule of self-mortification.

(*a*) Necessary for self mastery; necessary for the gaining of power over the special temptations of the priestly life. We have here also once again our Lord's example—self-mortification before His conflict with the tempter. How necessary, then, for ourselves who are in the forefront of the battle, lest we venture to our great conflict with evil, unprepared and undisciplined. How grievous the fall of the undisciplined priest, when '*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*'!

(*b*) Remember the Church's appointed fasts, their moral and spiritual purpose, involving the principle of self-mortification. '*I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.*'

III. The need of personal devotion. How simple a truth this seems! and yet it is too often neglected in the priest's life. It is ever necessary to be returning always to elementary duties, to examine how we keep our rule about

prayer, meditation, self-examination, etc. Perhaps we might find it helpful to let one of our Retreat resolutions bear directly upon our personal devotions, our private prayers, our preparations for Holy Communion. How again and again in his Epistles the blessed Apostle refers to his prayers! He truly had fully grasped what our Lord meant when He said: '*He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*'

Let us conclude our meditation with one or two other verses of Holy Scripture suggestive of the need of careful self-examination: '*This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*' '*Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting.*'

Address IV.

ST. PAUL'S APOSTOLIC WORK.

We pass on to-day to take a brief view of his Apostolic work. This is not only recorded for us in the Acts of the Apostles, but is vividly sketched in his own Epistles. The Epistles are the living portraiture of that work, and form an unconscious autobiography, describing in his own words and from his own point of view his Apostolic labours. '*In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*' So wholly given to the work to which the Lord had called him, as he says: '*Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace*

of God.' Or, again: '*I am now willing to be offered*'; or, once more: '*To me to live is Christ, to die is gain.*' Let us then turn to this portraiture. Its features are distinctly drawn, and there is one that strikes us at first sight—the wide scope of that work.

I. The extent of his travels. There is no need to dwell upon this, but we must just refer to it; again, the very varied scenes of his labours in Jerusalem, in Asia, and in Europe, in Ephesus, in Athens and in Rome, amongst Hebrews, Greeks and Latins, even as we read to 'the extremities of the West,' not excluding possibly Britain itself: '*In journeyings often.*'

II. Connected with this and in consequence of it—the width of his thought and the comprehensiveness of his mind. '*A Hebrew of the Hebrews*': brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers, and yet reared in his native city Tarsus, in the midst of the influences of Hellenistic thought and language. Tarsus, according to Strabo, in literature and philosophy, exceeded in fame even Athens and Alexandria; and according to St. Basil, Tarsus was a point of union for Syrians, Cilicians, Isaurians, Cappadocians, Greek merchants, Roman citizens, etc. The Apostle was thus from early training prepared to sympathise alike with Jew and Greek, and thus to become one of the great builders of the Catholic Church, combining the various elements of human thought, and uniting the nations of East and West in the one Body of Christ, in the one faith of the Gospel. He sets this forth in his own great saying: '*There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.*' And, again: '*There is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free: but Christ is all and in all.*'

III. Then, as evidenced by his work, the largeness of his sympathies. His sympathy with various classes—the rich and the poor. By his free birth and liberal education he had sympathy with the higher classes of the society of his day; by his trade his sympathies went out to the working classes, and by his contemplation of the voluntary poverty of our Lord, '*Who for our sakes became poor*,' he had sympathy also with the poorer classes. And thus he could say: '*I am made all things to all men.*' Such, then, is the groundwork of our meditation; it suggests several points of consideration to us in our work as priests.

Special Points.

I. Catholicity of thought—a width of view in the contemplation of the mysteries of the faith, not haziness or vagueness, but the power and habit of surveying the various sides and aspects of truth, and not narrowing our view to one aspect. St. Paul is a great pattern to us; no one held more definite views of Christian doctrine—*e.g.*, the Atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, the participation of the Divine nature in Sacraments—and yet none embraced a wider view. Let us try to look at well-defined truth from various standpoints—as St. Paul looked at it from the Jewish, the Greek, the intellectual, the moral and spiritual standpoints. Notice how to this habit he traces his influence over various classes of men. '*Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law*,' etc.

Take an example—the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. Here is opportunity for great diversity of view, yet we see in the Apostle's writings how the truth may be approached

from various points. Try to cultivate and cherish this wider view. There may be need of caution against indifference and haziness, but in reality the very reverse of this should be the result; we should value certain truth and realise its greatness without losing the unity, by contemplating it on all sides, and so becoming in the highest and best sense, '*all things to all men.*'

II. Sympathy with the masses. The spiritual problem is even greater than the political. The growing power of the working classes throws an awful responsibility upon the Church and her priesthood. It is for the Church to train them in that self-control and that elevation of Christian life which shall fit them for the duties that devolve upon them, so that they may retain or regain confidence in the classes in social position above them. How are they to be approached? By sympathy, large-hearted and self-sacrificing, entering into their circumstances, their feelings, their want of opportunities, troubles, wrongs; putting ourselves in their positions, viewing things as they view them, remembering the great maxims as well as the personal example of St. Paul: '*Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.*' '*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*' '*If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.*' Call to mind St. Paul's loving training of and care for Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave; his conduct in the storm, etc.

III. His sympathy a Divine grace, for it is not a mere natural disposition. '*By the grace of God I am what I am.*' Grace was supplied to him sufficient to regulate and sanctify the natural sympathy, and to create it when wanting, as St. Peter tells us: '*God hath showed me not to call any man common or unclean.*' And, further, this grace is a participation of *the mind of Christ.* This, it need not

be said, implies growth in the Divine life and character, and will produce true sympathy: (1) By eliminating and subduing self, and (2) by a growing love for others, even for the ungrateful or for an enemy. '*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*' Following out thus the Apostle's counsels we shall help on the fulfilment of our Master's glory. '*Thou shalt make me the head of the heathen. A people whom I have not known shall serve Me.*'

Address V.

THE INTENSITY OF ST. PAUL'S WORK.

We were considering this morning the wide scope of the Apostle's work, and in connection with this we touched upon: (1) His width of thought; (2) the largeness of his sympathy; and (3) the fact that his sympathy was the direct outcome of Divine grace. In contrast with this feature of St. Paul's work stands out another equally striking and noteworthy—its intensity. It is seen in the greatness of the genius and character of St. Paul, and in the combination of these two elements, width and comprehensiveness, with thorough mastery of detail in his work. In a still higher and truer sense this was in him a reflex of the Divine character of the mind and of the work of Christ, by his participation of the Divine Nature—that mind and that work of Christ which embraced in its scope the needs of the whole world, and yet could concentrate all its infinite power upon the individual soul and on the minutest detail of individual life, revealing to us the

universality of the Divine love—'*He died for all*'—and the *intensity* of the Divine love—'*He gave Himself for me*'—as we see it in the compassion of Jesus for the multitude or for the solitary soul.

Let us dwell now upon the intensity which characterises the Apostle's work. This is, for instance, especially noticeable in—

I. His minute attention to details. Each question that comes before him receives particular consideration, whatever it may be.

(*a*) A case of vital doctrine, like the Resurrection, in 1 Cor. xv.

(*b*) A case of outward order and ritual, devoutness at the Holy Communion, as in 1 Cor. xi., or the necessary order and decency to be observed in public worship, as in 1 Cor. xiv.

(*c*) A moral question, like that of marriage and divorce, as in 1 Cor. vii.

(*d*) A case of casuistry, the eating of meats and the observance of special days, as in 1 Cor. viii.

(*e*) The case of a runaway slave like Onesimus, or the special difficulties of those of Cæsar's household. All of them cases that had to be investigated, weighed, decided upon with minute care, and the consideration of their special circumstances. '*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*'

II. The Apostle's interest in individuals. This is especially observable throughout his Epistles.

(*a*) The salutations by name. This shows us how he bore individuals in his heart. What light it throws upon his work for souls.

(*b*) The separate care for Timothy, or Luke, or Titus, or Demas, or Onesiphorus (after his departure hence).

(*c*) The desire for each soul: '*That we may present every man* [*each man*] *perfect in Christ Jesus*,' like his Lord, '*Who would not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*'

Special Point: The Need of Minute Care in our Ministry.

I. Special attention to small duties. It is often very difficult to maintain a real interest in a small parish, or in an obscure work which brings no human notice, or in little duties, none being really little, for all are great that are done for the Master.

N.B.—True self-sacrifice lies, not so much in great acts of heroism, as in the little unobserved, unappreciated efforts of daily life; this has also its blessed influence upon the character, as we learn to live not for self-glorification, but in obedience, and in the due care for each small duty we shall *have the praise of God.*

II. Care for the individual soul. This is not only evident in St. Paul, but is, of course, also a great characteristic of our Lord's ministry. In the ministry of counsel and confession how needful it is to take trouble with the one soul whose needs are then present to us. '*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.*' '*He goeth after that which is lost until he find it.*' One of the questions we may well put to ourselves in Retreat is, 'How have I dealt with individual souls?' Have I shrunk from the trouble of dealing with individual souls, or have I been ready to minister to the attractive, and have refused help to the uninteresting? Have I passed over an obscure case, or forgotten how needful it is that I myself must be truly converted before I can truly help or influence others? We may be led to make some such resolution as this: To

use greater diligence in seeking for each lost soul, and in making such a one perfect in Christ, remembering the words: '*He that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*'; '*for it is not the will of your Father Which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*'

Address VI.

ST. PAUL THE AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST.

In our meditation this afternoon we were chiefly concerned with noticing in St. Paul's priestly work its comprehensiveness and intensity, and the various lessons thus suggested to ourselves as priests in the work of Christ our Lord. These features lead up (as has been already intimated) to a further aspect of it—viz., to his work, as the representative or ambassador of Christ. Let us make this the subject of our meditation this evening.

There is both in the Apostle's character and work a reproduction and reflection of the mind and work of Christ, both in the width of its scope and in the minute intensity of its action. So especially in his Apostolic and priestly office is the idea of representativeness ever present. He is the ambassador of Christ. This comes before us in at least two distinct lights:

I. He is the ambassador charged with his Divine Master's message. His characteristic words, so intensely Pauline: '*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.*' The verse comes in a passage

giving a message of reconciliation and peace (2 Cor. v. 20), offering full pardon and restoration to those who had been rebels against God; and alluding to the atoning work of Christ, he reminds his converts that it is his mission as an Apostle of Christ to announce to them God's great purpose of reconciliation. '*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.*' He then declares that he and his brother Apostles were entrusted to convey the terms of peace as the ambassadors of Christ: '*He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*'

II. But there is another and a higher phase still: he is also directly the representative of Christ. In the preceding chapter (dwelling on the same subject, the Gospel message and the Divine ministry) he points to a deeper and more mysterious representation of Christ—viz., the reproduction in himself, in his body, of the life of Christ, the suffering and the risen Jesus (see 2 Cor. iv. 10): '*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body.*' This is a deeply interesting passage, and gives us an idea of St. Paul's spiritual mysticism and his sense of intense unification with Christ, of his absorption into the life of Christ. It is his favourite idea, and he is ever returning to it—Christ formed in us, crucified with Christ, risen with Christ, ascended with Christ. Notice the various stages of the spiritual life viewed as a reproducing of the progressive life of our Lord's Humanity through suffering and death to the Resurrection and Ascension, especially in the Apostolic life, as, for instance, in 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11. The priest, the Apostle, not only bearing as an ambassador the Divine message of peace, but himself in his own life representing the life and the character of the Divine deliverer, so much so that he speaks of *the life of Jesus manifest in*

our mortal flesh, until he is '*changed into the same image from glory to glory.*'

Special Point: The Priest the Representative of Christ.

How fruitful, how suggestive is this thought! Let us look at it in some of its aspects:

I. The powers of the ambassador for Christ, the powers of the priesthood, Divine power, the gift of the Holy Ghost. How constantly St. Paul dwells on this point, as to St. Timothy, reminding him that his powers are derived, not his own—delegated to him! '*Stir up the gift that is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*' *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* So also in our own Ordinal—*e.g.*, '*Receive the Holy Ghost*,' etc. So full are the powers of forgiveness and peace and blessing that the priest is the plenipotentiary. '*Whose soever sins thou dost remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*' And yet the powers are His, not ours—'*that the excellency of the power may be of God.*'

II. Consider the great aim of the ambassador's mission, the interest and glory of the Divine Master. That ambassador is faithless and treacherous who forgets his Master's honour and seeks his own. So St. Paul: '*We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*' Let us search ourselves, my brethren, on this point. It is one of great difficulty, needing constant self-discipline.

(*a*) Mixed motives, selfishness. '*They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*'

(*b*) In matters of disappointment or failure. Why our grief? Is it our own honour or the Master's that we are grieved for? Why nervous? Why afraid? Why cast

down? Are we to preach self or Christ? Remember St. Paul: '*So now also Christ shall be magnified, . . . whether it be by life or by death*,' by failure or success.

(*c*) The real remedy for us is found in gradual conformity to the Divine mind, as we try to seek in all things God's glory as our Lord sought it. '*I have glorified Thee on the earth.*'

III. The influence of a true priestly life. The priest, like St. Paul, is to reproduce in his life the Master's Divine life. Remember the characteristics of the mind of Christ: its heroism, its patience, its silence, its self-control. That life tells. It puts forth not artificially merely, or professionally, but in very reality, the power of the Divine life, and out of that life Christ speaks, Christ works, Christ triumphs. '*The life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh.*' Oh may we each one take up the Apostle's words, '*Christ liveth in me*'! and so in faithfulness, in constancy, in increasing ministries, in the represented life of Christ, as partaking of Christ's priesthood, may the life of Christ be manifested in us, the life of Him who is a Priest for ever, '*a Priest upon His Throne.*'

Address VII.

ST. PAUL'S SACRAMENTAL UNION WITH CHRIST.

DURING our Retreat we have thus far been considering: (1) St. Paul's personal character, and (2) his priestly work. To-day as we draw to the close of the Retreat let us pass upward a little higher and contemplate, so far as we may, that which lay at the root both of his personal life and his

priestly work, the secret of all power—viz., his sacramental union with Christ. How marvellously is this realised in the Apostle's spiritual history. How his letters, which constitute his autobiography, in which he describes himself all the more vividly, because so spontaneously, in such unconscious outbursts of the life that kindled within him, teem with references to the mystery of his oneness with Christ! Let us, then, in our remaining meditations, consider this sacramental oneness. We have alluded to St. Paul's mysticism, unification with Christ. It is explained by, it has its source in, this sacramental union intensely realised.

I. We find a forcible expression of it in that passage in the Epistle to the Galatians: '*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*' This is no mere rhetorical figure, for St. Paul was intensely real. The life of the Divine Humanity was really communicated to him. It is constantly alluded to by him in reference to various stages of that life. (*a*) In the birth of Christ in the soul—'*till Christ be formed in you.*' (*b*) In the growth of Christ in us—'*the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*'; corporately and individually—'*every joint*,' each man '*perfect in Christ.*' (*c*) The tokens and powers of that indwelling life: '*If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness*'; '*that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body.*' (*d*) The sufferings of that life in ours: '*I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*' (*e*) The gradual absorption into the fulness of Divine Life—'*that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*'

II. With the above we may well compare parallel teaching in St. John, teaching such as we might naturally expect in the Apostle of love and of contemplation. We refer

to such texts and expressions in his writings as: '*God dwelleth in us*,' '*We know that He abideth in us*.' And, again, not only '*We abide in Him*,' but '*He in us*.' The gradual transformation into the Divine Image: '*Changed into the same Image*' (St. Paul); '*We know that we shall be like Him*' (St. John).

III. Both Apostles derive the truth and the Divine indwelling from our Blessed Lord Himself, as recorded by St. John: '*Abide in Me and I in you*.' And we remember that these words were spoken on the occasion of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, thus connecting for all time this life of union with the Eucharist. All spiritual fruitfulness comes to us from this source—the union of the soul with Christ. '*He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*.' The Christian—the priest especially—is the Χριστοφόρος and Θεοφόρος in the later language of St. John's disciples, St. Polycarp and St. Ignatius; and it compares well with one special feature of St. Paul's teaching, in which he, too, lays stress upon this union, where he speaks of Christ abiding, living in us—not merely we in Christ, but Christ in us, developing His life in our mortal body: '*Christ liveth in me*.'

Special Point: The Sacramental Life of the Priest as the Χριστοφόρος.

Let us, then, briefly question ourselves on the mystery of the indwelling Christ. How have we realised this life—'*Christ liveth in me*'?

I. Does Christ indeed live in me? Such life is known by its manifestation in us. Is, then, our own nature being transformed so that it can be truly said of us that

we are putting on Christ? Let us test ourselves by looking within for signs of this which are unmistakable:

(*a*) Deadness of the body to sin—'*Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin*'—the question for us being not—Is sin removed? but—Is sin being overcome, being slain in us?

(*b*) Self-love yielding to the Divine love. Again, not the annihilation of self, but the holding it in subjection to the higher love. '*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who . . . made Himself of no reputation.*'

(*c*) The affections less set upon the earth and more on things above. Growth in a heavenly temper: Christ absorbing the affections till, one after another, all things are forsaken for Him, even as He emptied Himself of all for us. '*Your life is hid with Christ in God*,' and so, looking on to the perfect day '*when Christ, Who is our life, shall appear*,' then we also may hope to *appear with Him in Glory*.' Is Christ thus living in us, developing His life in us, in its power and in its triumph over the flesh, over self, over the world?

II. Does Christ work in us?

(*a*) In our manifold bodily activities. What danger there is to the priest in idleness, in the sin of sloth! How easily may he become an *unprofitable servant* and *a castaway!* whilst on the other hand, '*He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*'

(*b*) In the contemplative life as well as the practical, the spirit working as well as the body; the intellect exercised on Divine things, the spiritual faculty being brought into play, and thus counteracting the danger that arises from mental sloth. What time are we giving to

meditation on spiritual mysteries, on '*the things of the Spirit*'? Looking not '*at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.*' Living, in a word, more amid the realities of the unseen life, realising, it may be, more fully our Lord's example: '*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*'

(*c*) The nature of our work. Has it the true stamp of the Christ-work? Does it reproduce it—(1) In the real love of souls, (2) in an ever growing simplicity of motive for God's glory? For in the fervid language of the Apostle, the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. Does, then, Christ work in us? Are His words realised in the priestly life of each one of us? '*The works that I do shall he do also.*'

III. (*a*) Does Christ suffer in us? Remember the Apostle's startling words: '*I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church.*' What do I know of this experience of suffering, of *the fellowship of His sufferings* —of Christ, that is, suffering in us?

(*b*) For there are deep experiences of priestly suffering. (1) Sorrow over the dishonour done to Christ in His members, often through carelessness and indifference. What do we know of this? '*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?*' It is possible for men to crucify Christ afresh. Do we in turn feel the pangs caused by such crucifixion? (2) Anguish for the fall of a soul, once holy, from purity or holiness. Do we know the sense of this anguish? '*I am crucified with Christ.*' (3) Distress lest we, by any neglect or infirmity, have failed to strengthen our brethren, or to keep some soul steadfast. What do we know, my brothers, of Christ thus suffering in us? There is, as we see (or there should be), an original meaning for

us in St. Paul's expression, '*that I may know . . . the fellowship of His sufferings.*'

Oh, may we in our life, our work, our suffering, enter more and more into that mysterious aspiration of the Apostle '*that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead!*'

Address VIII.

THE PLACE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE OF THE PRIEST.

Let us this afternoon follow up our morning meditation by glancing a little at the Divinely appointed means, or channel, of this mysterious oneness with Christ, which is, as we have seen, to be drawn out in our priestly experience. Let us consider together 'the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ,' for the Holy Eucharist holds a special and unique position in the teaching of St. Paul. It was a matter of special revelation to him: '*I have received of the Lord*' (see 1 Cor. xi. 23). So that we cannot wonder that the Apostle who teaches Justification by Faith, and enters into the doctrine of election, is also as emphatically the Apostle of the sacramental life in Christ. There is no opposition in his mind between so-called spiritual views and the doctrine of the Sacraments. Now, there are features of his teaching on this point which are deeply interesting.

I. It connects itself with the participation of the Divine life, or the indwelling of Christ in us. This, we

saw, he continually dwells upon ; and we can hardly separate the Divine gift from the Divine ordinance, so in that well-known passage (1 Cor. x. 15), '*the Cup of blessing*,' etc., the Apostle asserts the close fellowship or union with Christ in His Body and Blood, or as St. John re-echoes the truth, '*truly our fellowship* (κοινωνία) *is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*' For, being partakers of the Divine Humanity of Christ, we are filled more and more with the fulness of God.

II. Hence, again, he dwells so strongly on the Real Objective Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

That Presence is not merely subjective in the heart of the faithful receiver. It is there to condemn as well as to bless ; and the unfaithful receiver, independent of the subjective conditions, is not merely one who receives no blessing, but who is '*guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*,' present in the holy mystery.

III. Hence, once more, and for the same reason, the Apostle lays down the paramount need of careful preparation. He warns most seriously against unworthy reception. He points out how it involves condemnation on this very ground : the presence of the Lord's Body, which the unworthy recipient ignores and profanes. '*He eateth and drinketh damnation* (condemnation, or, as the R.V. has it, judgment) *to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.*' Therefore he enjoins strict self-examination before Communion : '*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.*'

Special Points : Two Brief Reflections.

I. The Holy Communion—the Priest's participation of the Divine Life.

(*a*) The Holy Communion is his daily sacrifice.

(*b*) It is also his daily feast—*i.e.*, the continual replenishing of his soul with the Divine life; the union with his Lord; the participation, day by day, of a supernatural life, of the energies, the powers, and the graces of that life, which is the life of Christ in him, so that in St. Paul's great phrase Christ may live in him.

Have we realised our Celebrations in that light? Do not we as priests, more than others, need this perpetual inflow of Divine life, if we are to be in the van and front of the conflict with evil? or, again, if we are to represent Christ in our daily ministries to the souls of men—if we are to put forth the energies and powers of that life in the office and work of the priesthood—'*bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*'

II. The need of deep, earnest, personal preparation for Communion. What a difference this would make in one year to our spiritual life! But it follows, surely, as we realise the gift—yea, rather the Person—we receive.

(*a*) Think of the fearful effects of unworthy Communion withering up the life of the soul.

(*b*) How necessary to make a point of securing time for personal devotion before Celebrating! careful, too, in being regular and punctual—careful in our earnestness, bearing in mind the possibility of our need of the awful warning, '*One of you shall betray Me*'; '*Master, is it I?*'

(*c*) The encouragement to this preparation is found in the unlimited possibilities of Divine grace and the Divine life in those fitted to receive them. It is, let us remember, only our want of capacity and of fitness which hinders a far fuller development of the supernatural life in us. And it is thus that we may rise to the Apostle's noble

confidence: '*I can do all things through Christ, Which strengtheneth me*'; and to his glowing assurance: '*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*' Or, again, '*All things are yours, . . . and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*'

Well may we conclude our meditation with the words of the Psalmist: '*O set me up upon the Rock that is higher than I.*' Yea, Lord, '*Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.*'

Address IX.

THE ISSUE OF THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE.

We pass on now in our concluding meditation to the consideration of the issue of this sacramental life.

We shall find that here also St. Paul is our teacher. Let us look on into the future, as we reach the close of our Retreat—the near and the distant future. What shall be in the end? What shall be the issue of the mystery of this indwelling life, when, after a few years, our earthly course is finished, and, if we persevere, the transforming processes of grace are developed in us? This is a solemn and a moving question for us to-night. The Apostle often faces the great question and points on to the great hope. And what is it? How does he describe it? It is this, is it not?—the transformation into the Image of Christ at length made complete: '*Changed into the same Image from glory to glory.*' In other words, the develop-

ment of the Divine Humanity in our body till He is fully formed in us.

There are passages in the Epistles in support of this which will recur to you at once:

I. '*Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself*' (R.V.).

II. This thought is more fully drawn out in the great chapter on the Resurrection (1 Cor. xv.), when this same transformation, or final development of the Divine Humanity of Christ in us, forms the very climax of his argument: the natural body developed into the spiritual, the earthly into the heavenly, and that, as you will remember, through the quickening energy of the last Adam, '*the Lord from Heaven*,' stamping upon those that are His, communicating to them in a mystery, the Image of His own incorruptible Manhood: '*As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.*'

III. The method a mystery. How? We see not yet. In some way, no doubt, by a communication of the Humanity of Christ. This seems to be involved in the statement, '*The last Adam is a quickening Spirit.*' And surely, if we bear in mind, first, that the great purpose of Communion is the participation by us of the very Body and Blood of Christ, and secondly, how the Apostle's thought is, so to speak, impregnated with the idea of sacramental participation, we can hardly fail to discern in the Blessed Sacrament the link between the natural and the spiritual, and to trace (as far as on this subject our spiritual eye can reach) the method of the transformation, in the quickening virtue of Sacramental

Communion, justifying the title given to it in early ages by one of the great Fathers of the Church—'the Food of Immortality'; so (though perhaps we have not always, or of late years, sufficiently dwelt on this purpose of Communion) the Liturgy reminds us of it in the words of administration:—'The Body . . . preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.' '*Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*'

Such, then, is the issue of the sacramental life. And it leads us on to some closing reflections on this last evening of our Retreat.

I. Consider the progress of the Divine life in us. Are we reaching on to this Divine likeness? Are we conscious that spiritual power is growing within us? Not the cessation from temptation, not the freedom from failure, not the ceasing or even always the lessening of the great struggle with evil, but are we gaining power over these? We must be careful to note this, otherwise we shall mistake the signs of Divine growth. So with our Blessed Lord on earth, the Divine Humanity triumphed not by the silence, or the hushing of strife, but by the power which sustained and bore it triumphant through all and over all. And '*As He is, so are we in this world.*'

II. The mystery of the Divine growth. All is yet clouded in mystery—all this marvellous transformation into the Divine Image. '*It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*' The very mystery is suggestive of many self-questionings.

(*a*) Of warning. Decay instead of growth in the spiritual life. Is it so with any of us? Sometimes growth in one direction, and strange deterioration in another. One sin subdued, another gaining power. Is it

so? It is a solemn thought that a man is often unconscious of these decays: '*Yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.*'

(*b*) Nevertheless, also in this mystery there is consolation. Growth is sometimes truest when it is least perceived. Is there despondency at no apparent growth? weariness at the unceasing struggle with sin and self? enthusiasm and brightness seemingly quenched? It is so often in the advance of the spiritual life as years pass on. We are getting into a deeper region than natural feeling. Yes, very often the power of the growth is being secured by the very strength of the conflict. '*Blessed is the man that endureth.*' The darkness will issue in light. We are travailing with the birth-pangs of the Christ-like life till Christ be formed in us.

III. The great hope set before us.

This, perhaps, is best described in the words of St. John: '*It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*' The Beatific Image, the Beatific Vision. This is enough. After the struggle, after the waiting, after the mystery, to be found raised up in His likeness; partaking of His very nature, and in that nature thus made Divine—to see God as He is—to dwell in the presence of our Lord, for ever beholding Him, no more '*through a glass darkly, but then face to face.*'

Such, then, to conclude, is our great hope, set before us continually by St. Paul, on whose life and pattern we have been dwelling in this Retreat. How many expressions and sayings of his there are in his Epistles to this effect! they occur over and over again. '*Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*' '*Every*

man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's.' '*Changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*' '*When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*'

Even so, Lord, grant it to each one of us who have here been gathered together; may it indeed be for each one to experience then what now we long for and pray for. '*As for me, I shall behold Thy presence in righteousness, and when I wake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.*'

Notes of Addresses given at a Retreat for Clergy at Canterbury and at Ely, 1899.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

THE solemnity of feeling we experience in entering into Retreat may be accounted for in various ways.

I. There is a consciousness of our Lord's call. *He* calls us; *He* brings us together. '*Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile.*'

II. We believe that a Divine purpose underlies this call into Retreat. He sees we need counsel or warning for our spiritual life. '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me*'; or, as in those Retreats with His disciples in the days of His flesh, we may need illumination in some mystery of the faith or in our life. '*When they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples.*' Or, once more, we may need a renewal of strength for the future. We need a new start, spiritual refreshment, and reinvigoration. Our energies, it may be, are exhausted by long toiling in the world. '*They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.*' '*He went on his way rejoicing.*' Such, in some sort, are our feelings. '*I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God.*' It is of importance to have a fixed and definite subject before our minds in Retreat,

and to avoid vagueness in the multiplicity of thoughts that may arise. I propose as the subject around which we may concentrate our attention Our Lord's Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia. In pondering them together we may find their teaching very fruitful at such a time as a Retreat.

(*a*) The number 'Seven,' signifying completeness. The messages were in reality addressed to the whole Church, and for all time, for our own as well as for the first or second century. (*b*) The ruler, or angel, or guide of the Church is addressed in each. Thus the counsels are specially counsels for priests individually. '*Take heed to thyself.*' (*c*) The special errors and dangers referred to are strangely typical, such as in various forms have marked the history of the Church from the beginning, and which beset her still even at this day. '*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*' (*d*) Our Lord speaking from heaven, shows that He retains an abiding interest in His Church; and not only this, it indicates His perpetual presence with her. Still we see His Form, still we hear His Voice—'*in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man,*' speaking, comforting, counselling His priests. '*I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*'

May He be with us at this time! May we hear His voice speaking to us in these messages to His Church; and as we hear, may we turn to the voice of Him that speaks to us, and, being turned, see Him, our Lord and Master, and may that vision abide with us for ever—the vision of His countenance, kindling, guiding, stirring, comforting us amid all trials and all points of our future course even to the end, till we sit at His side in His glory and dwell in His presence for evermore.

Address I.

Rev. ii. 1-8.

DECLENSION FROM EARLY ENTHUSIASM AND DEVOTION.

I. We begin our meditations with the message to the angel or bishop of the Church at Ephesus. The Church is impersonated by its ruler, and *individuality* is stamped upon the message. It refers not only to errors of the Church or of the day, but brings before us the relation of the individual to these errors. So with us, my brothers, in Retreat. We come away from the confusing tumult, the strifes, the errors, the mingled fortunes of the Church, her victories and her failures, to ourselves individually. How am I doing *my* part? Where stands my own soul in the midst of the conflict in relation to itself, to others, to God? What has been, what is the effect of all this upon myself individually?

II. One note in this message to the guide or ruler of the Church at Ephesus, to which we may turn in our opening meditation this morning, is found in verse 4: '*I have somewhat against thee, that thou hast left thy first love.*' This gives us the subject of our meditation—declension from early enthusiasm and devotion. It will lead us to inquire of ourselves, 'Does the Lord see in me any mark of decline?'

(*a*) This message comes direct from our Lord, from the Son of Man, in the midst of the Church. Our Lord was seen by St. John the Divine, not only on the Throne, but in the midst of seven golden candlesticks—*i.e.*, in the midst of the Church (Rev. i. 20)—as One Whose glorified

Person walks up and down in the Church, and Who is actively concerned in the supervision of His Church.

(*b*) It is a message which speaks to the whole Church in all time of her earthly warfare. They are words of the Son of Man '*which pass not away.*' Notice, moreover, the mystery of the seven candlesticks, the figure expressing completeness,—the whole, the universal Church. It is as much a message to the Church of our own century as to the Church of the first and second centuries. The *forms* of error vary from age to age, yet the essential errors are much the same at any period of the Church's history. '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.*'

(*c*) The message itself speaks of declension from the first love. Notice, not absolute apostasy—for there are great virtues specified as belonging to the guide of the Ephesian Church, such as labour, patience, discernment of error, hatred of heresy—but withal the first love cooled, the last works not equal to the first; in a word, declension. In verse 5 we have the great dangers of this declension pointed out. *Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

Special Point: Spiritual Decline in the Priest's Inner Life.

I. Take, in this Retreat, a retrospect of your ministry.

(*a*) How widely different are our experiences in the priestly life! How sad the spectacle of a once earnest ministry grown slack and indifferent! '*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*' The first love lost.

(*b*) Consider the insensible effect of the wear and tear of daily work upon the inner life and upon our early ardour. How dangerous to any priest is this loss! Perseverance must be its remedy. Remember our Lord's question, '*Lovest thou Me?*'

(*c*) Beware of the subtlety of possible failure, a decline in some one point, apparently trivial, amid much that is earnest and spiritual and persevering; in other points it may be *growing*, yet decline has begun in some secret region of the spiritual life, and, as in bodily weakness, the one affected part may affect the whole. Which of us is free? Search and see, lest perchance it be true of us: '*Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.*'

II. How may we test this decline? It is very important to notice that guidance with regard to this is vouchsafed in the message to Ephesus. Notice the connection between *the first love* and *the first works*. The test, then, is not to be looked for in our feelings, but in the practical life of obedience and devotion. A decline of *feeling* is not necessarily evil, but '*By their fruits ye shall know them.*' And so we may test ourselves to-day by such questions as, —Does my obedience, my patience, my calm perseverance, my trustful, cheerful surrender of self, my spirit of self-sacrifice, show signs of decline, of decay? '*If ye love Me, keep My commandments.*'

III. The peril of this condition. Notice the warning to the Ephesian Bishop, '*I will remove thy candlestick.*' Failure in vocation involves the forfeiture of office. The servant found faithless is to be spurned by his Lord; '*O thou wicked and slothful servant.*' The special perils to be guarded against are clearly these: (*a*) The hidden

insidious progress of decline, and this in the midst of much labour, toil and witness, the exterior life active, the inner life neglected. '*If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.*' (*b*) The need of reflection: '*Wherefore remember.*' So in Retreat self-survey is necessary. '*Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.*' (*c*) The immediate resolve. Return, repent at once; '*Except thou repent.*' The call comes to each in this Retreat. God grant that we may here renew our allegiance to our Divine Lord, and once more restored to His favour, hear His loving voice as He says again to each one of us, '*Follow Me.*'

Address II.

Rev. ii. 1-8 (*continued*).

DOCTRINAL FAITHFULNESS.

I. We pass on to another portion of the message, a message here not of warning, but of commendation to the spiritual guide of the Ephesian Church. Our Lord notices his faithfulness in abhorring and rejecting error. '*This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds* (or works) *of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*'

There is much here to engage our meditation. St. John the Divine was the messenger chosen by our Lord to convey His message to the various Churches, and so we find him here as ever the Apostle of love and the Apostle of truth. Notice, then, St. John's firmness in denouncing heresy.

We must be struck with the fact that it is the Apostle of love who is chosen to denounce unsparingly false doctrine, error, aberration from the truth. The sect of the Nicolaitanes was an Antinomian and licentious Gnostic sect. Possibly its name was derived from Nicolas the Deacon (Acts vi. 5). This was the opinion of St. Irenæus and Tertullian. In the message to Pergamos we read again of '*the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes*' as incurring the Divine anger and hatred. There was, of course, a connection between the *doctrine* and the *works*.

II. The errors denounced by St. John in this part of the message are not local or transient, but recurring continually under various forms in the history of the Church.

(*a*) *Antinomianism* with its fruit, laxity of life, over and over again.

(*b*) The errors of Cerinthus, an intellectual form of Gnosticism, denying the reality of the Incarnation and with it all the supernatural, making a distinction between the Man Jesus and the Divine Christ. What a feature of much of the intellectual Christianity (which is not Christianity) of our own day!—the rejection of the supernatural, and at the same time the adoption of all the fruits of Christianity while ignoring the root. '*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.*'

III. Praise of the Ephesian Church, its rejection of Nicolaism. Here, at least, was no false concord with error. True charity *amat errantes, odit errores*. This is a spirit opposed to the tendency of to-day, the tendency of to-day being towards a false unity, accepting error as a matter of indifference. For our blessed Lord is *the Truth* as well as *the Way* and *the Life*. '*Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.*' '*This is life eternal, that they may know Thee*

the only true God and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.' '*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*'

Special Point: The Witness of the Priest against Doctrinal Error.

I. Consider the prevailing indifference to dogmatic truth. It is, of course, one of the features of the day, and it has sufficiently shown itself in proposals to blend all forms of doctrine in a so-called national Christianity—Creeds and Catechisms despised and set on one side, and, as a result, we find even fundamental doctrines like the Incarnation and the Resurrection spiritualised away. Remember our Lord's witness to Ephesus and Pergamos. There are two dangers in our way:

(*a*) The snare of intellectualism:—the rejection of the supernatural.

(*b*) The snare of worldly opinion: not wishing to appear overstrict, an evidence of weakness and timidity, for fear of giving offence or of incurring unpopularity. Through all our difficulties God grant we may hold fast by the truth. '*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God*'; '*My Lord and my God.*' That we may share the blessing: '*Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*'

II. Consider the close connection between truth and life, doctrine and practice. Let us trace this.

(*a*) Alas! we know there may be orthodoxy without life, by a kind of perversion—as St. Paul says: '*having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof.*' And by grace there may be, on the other hand, life and reality without orthodoxy.

(*b*) Call to mind the experiences of our ministry.

If careless and sinful, if faithless, or if we have indulged erroneous and low views about the Sacraments, the result has surely been the lowering of the standard of Christian life in ourselves and in our priesthood. On the other hand, a deep faith in our union with our Lord raises the life to a supernatural level. '*Because I live, ye shall live also.*' '*I am the Truth*' first, and then, '*I am the Life.*' Review in Retreat your attitude towards the doctrines of the Church, the gift of the Holy Ghost and the Sacramental Presence.

III. The loving maintenance of truth—*speaking the truth in love.*

(*a*) Truth is commended by our gentleness and patience; people are won by these. Love wins to truth even in difficult parishes.

(*b*) Truth is commended by our own sanctity of life: '*By their fruits ye shall know them.*' How great is the power of the quiet sanctity of a loving and devout spirit—and of self-restraint! '*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*' The exercise of patience is a great act of self-discipline and strengthens the character, but beware of the danger of bitterness when at times we fail in self-control. Such failure will bring a great opportunity of grace to ourselves if we meet it rightly, and will, please God, develop in us a love of souls. '*I endure all things for the elect's sake.*'

Address III.

Rev. ii. 8-12.

PERSONAL SUFFERING.

We pass on to-night to consider the message of the Great Head of the Church to the Bishop of the Church at Smyrna. Another and a very different aspect of the priestly life is presented to us by our Lord in this message. His words have reference to the conflicts and sufferings of the life. There is a special ring of assurance and consolation, in the message under the pressure of great suffering, to this Church and its Bishop. '*I know thy works and tribulation and poverty* (*but thou art rich*). . . . *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.*' No sin, no special fault is charged against the Church at Smyrna, and yet it is exposed to the fierce and persistent malignity of Satan. '*Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried. . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*' Yet He is among them, Who has overcome death. '*The First and the Last, Which was dead and is alive.*'

Notice one or two points of special interest in connection with this Church, which may form the groundwork of the meditation.

I. The very name Smyrna means 'myrrh,' which is typical of suffering.

II. The connection of Smyrna with St. Polycarp, who was its martyr Bishop. (The Epistle of the Church of Smyrna records the fact of the Jews demanding that St. Polycarp might be cast to the lions.)

III. The threatened tribulations. Ten days implies a period short but sharp.

Special Point: The Special Intensity of Priestly Suffering.

I. Arising from: (*a*) The malignity of Satan. Temptation,—'*that ye may be tried*' or tempted by long imprisonment, and thus possibly be tempted to apostasy. Or, again, by outward troubles and opposition stirred up by Satan, the accuser of the brethren, '*which accuseth them before God day and night.*' '*They overcame Him . . . and they loved not their lives unto the death.*' (*b*) The priest is the representative of Christ. '*The disciple is not above his Lord.*' So Satan's enmity directed against the priest, and the sufferings of Christ abound in the priest. They come across us in uncongenial work, or in want of ministerial success, or in weak health, etc. '*I fill up,*' says St. Paul, '*that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh.*' '*Ye are they,*' said our Lord, '*which have continued with Me in My temptations.*' How great should be our consolation as we recollect this in our times of suffering and trial! He is asking each, '*Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I drink of*'? (*c*) The critical issue. (1) The fall of the priest more terrible, the triumph of the priest more glorious. (2) The fall: special personal watchfulness needed in priests. '*Satan hath desired to have you.*' '*Satan entered into him.*' '*They all forsook Him and fled*'—instances these of the awful result of neglect in priests of watchfulness and prayer. (3) The triumph through suffering. Our Lord Himself made '*perfect through sufferings.*' Thus the priest may be made like unto his Lord, if he endures the chastening meted out to him by a Divine but loving

hand, and the crown of life will in a short time, ten days of tribulation as it were, be found an eternal reward. '*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh in us a far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory.*' '*Where I am, there shall also My servant be.*'

Address IV.

Rev. ii. 12-18.

PERSONAL PROTECTION.

I. We pass on this morning to the message of our Lord to the Church of Pergamos, or Pergamum, and the special counsel for the priestly life which it may suggest. The message opens with a solemn declaration, twofold in character. It brings before us: (*a*) The quick, penetrating power of judgment in our Lord: '*He which hath the sharp sword with two edges.*' (*b*) The awful dominion of Satan at Pergamum: '*Thou dwellest even where Satan's seat* (throne) *is.*' This warning of the dominion of Satan emphasises the fact, and carries on the idea touched upon last night—the special malignity of Satan against the Church, and especially against the rulers or priests of the Church—but it adds the assuring thought of His knowledge of the great evil and of His power to avenge His own elect. '*I know where thou dwellest.*' '*I am He Who hath the sharp sword with two edges.*' The idea put before us here is the safeguard of the Church against the power and enmity of the Evil One. Notice, further, some of the characteristics of the message.

II. What is the special dominion of Satan here alluded

to—'the throne of Satan'? Pergamum was notorious for its idolatry: (*a*) The Fane of Æsculapius was there. (*b*) The symbol of his worship was a serpent ('*that old serpent the devil*'). (*c*) The Roman court was at Pergamum where the sentences of the magistrate were given—'the seat or throne of Satan.'

III. Notice our Lord's special protection of the Church so specially tried. (*a*) His appreciation of its efforts: '*I know thy works.*' (*b*) His knowledge and sympathy in its special difficulties: '*where thou dwellest*' surrounded by Satan's emissaries, the object of his malice. (*c*) His loving reference to His faithful martyr Antipas: '*My witness, My faithful one*' (R.V.). It is supposed that Antipas suffered under Domitian—he is not otherwise known—one of those precious ones unknown to the world, of whom it is written: '*The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.*' '*These are they which came out of great tribulation*': '*therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand*': '*their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High.*'

Special Point: The Special Care of our Lord for the Faithful Priest.

I. His power in restraining the malice of Satan. He '*hath the sharp sword*'—sharp to avenge evil upon the Wicked One. So in St. Peter's case, '*Satan hath desired to have you . . . but I have prayed for thee.*' And we know the end. '*Though he fall, he shall not be cast away: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.*'

II. His knowledge of the special trials and difficulties of our life. '*I know where thou dwellest*'—thy special

sphere of work, its drawbacks, its oppositions, its special cross, all that thy position involves '*I know.*' The special dominion that Satan exercises in your parish, in your home, in your own heart, '*I know.*' (*a*) What an assurance this thought may bring to us!—'*I fear no evil, for Thou art with me.*' (*b*) What duty of trustful contentment! '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work*'—to do whatever work is appointed for us in our special sphere, to bear, it may be, a special cross, for the Cup is given and the work is given by the same Hand. (*c*) What a danger there is in restlessness and fear. How disordering to the spiritual life, what an advantage given to Satan. '*Hold thee still in the Lord.*' '*Fret not thyself: . . . else shalt thou be moved to do evil.*'

III. His appreciation of our efforts and of our sufferings for Him. (*a*) '*I know thy works.*' '*God is not unrighteous that He will forget your works and labour that proceedeth of love.*' (*b*) He approves our constancy in suffering or our perseverance in trying work. Witness is borne more often by patience than by activity, or, again, by patience in inactivity. '*My witness, My faithful one.*' (*c*) His eye sees our secret sacrifices and struggles. As in the case of the martyr Antipas, we may not be known to the world at large. But He knows all, He treasures up the tears and sighs of His faithful ones. '*Are not these things noted in Thy Book?*' He will reward all: '*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*'

Address V.

Rev. ii. 18 to end.

SECRET FAITHFULNESS.

There is a special stamp impressed upon the message to this Church, the Church of Thyatira. And we may notice, first, the great significance of the characteristics our Lord here assumes to Himself.

I. The searching penetration of His glance—'*eyes like unto a flame of fire*' (verse 18).

II. His knowledge of the heart in its inmost depths—'*He which searcheth the reins and hearts*' (verse 23)—reminding us of the words: '*All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.*'

The message contains a solemn warning to the Church and to the Bishop as to the need of secret faithfulness, faithfulness in the hidden life. To the warning is attached here as so often in these messages a commendation of increasing faithfulness in (*a*) love and service, in (*b*) faith and patience—*i.e.*, in the inward life of grace no less than in its outward manifestations. '*I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first.*' '*For the righteous God trieth the very hearts and reins*'; and He '*preserveth them that are true of heart.*'

Notice, further, some incidents in the history of the Church of Thyatira.

I. The origin of the Church is attributed to Lydia, St. Paul's convert at Philippi (Acts xvi. 14).

II. The mention of Jezebel, probably some influential and heretical woman, whose Antinomian laxity had its

source in Gnostic error. At Thyatira was a temple of the Chaldean or Hebrew sibyl, Sambotha, a Jewess. Is this the woman referred to as Jezebel? Whether it is so or not, she occupies a recognised position as a teacher of *the depths of Satan* and a persecutor of Christians.

III. *Depths of Satan.* With reference to this phrase, we may notice and contrast the three expressions with regard to Satan that occur in these messages: (*a*) The synagogue of Satan (Smyrna); (*b*) the throne of Satan (Pergamos); (*c*) the depths of Satan (pretended Satanic mysteries at Thyatira). Prominence is given in all to the power and active interference of Satan. The 'synagogue of Satan' probably speaks of *Jewish* antagonism; the 'throne of Satan' of *heathen* antagonism; 'the depths of Satan' of *heretical* antagonism.

While this heretical teaching is going on in the very midst of the Church at Thyatira, how needful was it for all to search their hearts and to keep them pure and true to God, uninfluenced by the position and opposition of the great and the powerful, or of their threats and promises! '*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try out my reins and my heart.*'

Special Point: The Discipline of the Inner Life of the Priest.

I. The regulation of the affections—'*hearts and reins*,' '*the affections and lusts*'—in a word, the passions.

(*a*) How great a power is the power of the flesh! '*I keep under my body*,' says St. Paul, '*and bring it into subjection.*' How fatal it may be for us if this power of the flesh is not under control, if our passions are gaining the mastery over the higher nature within us.

(*b*) Or, again, the subtlety of the affections; even when pure these may be 'inordinate,' blinding, carrying away, and at last irresistible: '*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*'

(*c*) How needful is a rule of self-discipline! what a safeguard in self-restraint!—There must be regular mortification of self. '*Take heed to thyself.*' '*If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*'

II. Purification of the motives. How needful to us priests. The very sacredness of the outward ministry so often hides, not only from others, but from ourselves, the inner springs of life and action. Here in this message the Church of Thyatira is warned against the secret influence and power of Jezebel. (*a*) The influence of outward considerations, of greatness, rank, friendship: '*None of these things move me.*' (*b*) Secret vain-glory: '*the praise of men*,' notoriety, power of influence, etc., desired more than '*the praise of God.*' In sermons, in the work of our ministry why are we afraid of, or mortified at failure? Why nervous? Why over-anxious to do well? Cannot we trace the source of these things almost always to self-love? Remember our Lord, who said, '*I seek not Mine own glory.*' (*c*) Is there not need to cultivate more and more earnestly the love of God only? How? By gradual sanctification, by conformity of will. Little by little, till *we* will what He wills, and *we* love what He loves, and love all in Him and for Him, and Him above all. '*Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.*'

Address VI.

Rev. iii. 1-6.

outward success.

Another warning comes before us in the message that follows to the ruler *of the Church in Sardis*, and suggests the consideration of a possible danger in our ministry. '*Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.*' Let us think of this together to-night, and see how inward deadness may co-exist with outward success.

Here, again, notice first the characteristics our Lord assumes: '*He that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*' Our Lord is the Giver of the Spirit for the revival of spiritual life. Hence His title, '*He that hath the seven spirits of God*,' the Spirit in His sevenfold power.

Notice, secondly, how our Lord is also the Author and Sustainer of the ministry of living men in His Church; *the seven stars* (compare Rev. i. 20) under His hand and guidance are the seven rulers or angels of the Churches. Commenting on this verse Archbishop Trench,* referring to the combination of our Lord's titles, says: 'We must see in this combination a hint of the relation between Christ as the Giver of the Holy Spirit and as the Author of a ministry of living men in His Church.' '*I have chosen you and ordained you.*' '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*'

Notice, thirdly, the special character of the sin and danger of the Sardian Church. Here there was no heresy in doctrine, no failure in outward discipline, but the out-

* 'Commentary on Epp. to Seven Churches,' p. 163. Ed. 1886.

ward appearance of a flourishing Church, and yet the inward life was dying out while the outward manifestation of spiritual life remained. '*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead*'—a startling and solemn warning. All around thought that at Sardis the Church was living and energetic, while God—God only—saw the want of life, the want of reality, the want of sincerity within. '*I have not found thy works perfect before God.* It is clear that Sardis had lost the heartiness, the reality of her early faith; and her danger was the greater because there was in her case no conflict with foes within or without. All was easy, and at the same time deceptive. Here only, and in Laodicea, there is no mention of a special burden to be borne, no conflict, no persecution from without, no opposition from within. 'How often,' says a writer, 'has the coldness, the deadness and lukewarmness of a Church been the result of its repose!' '*Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.*'

Special Point: The Deepening of the Inner Life.

I. Consider the glamour of outward success; its deceptiveness, as the mind is drawn off from interior contemplation, self-satisfied, because the outward opinion or judgment of men is taken as the standard, and not the judgment of God, '*Who knoweth the hearts.*' Archbishop Trench in his 'Commentary'* quotes here the words of Cecil to the effect that a minister of Christ is very often in highest honour with men for the performance of one half his work, while God is regarding him with displeasure for the neglect of the other half of it. '*Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.*' The spiritual life of such an one will be shallow and not deep. On the other hand,

* Page 167. Ed. 1886.

the salutary discipline of outward failure has comfort in it if we are really true, for we know that '*The Lord seeth not as man seeth.*'

II. Again, as we think of the life within we learn to see more and more the need of self-mortification, the more so when all is prosperous without. There are three spheres, so to speak, of self-mortification: (*a*) The world with its allurements, gains, possessions, and amusements: '*Love not the world.*' (*b*) The flesh with its affections and lusts: '*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.*' (*c*) The devil and self, with the love of honour, of notice, of self-seeking. '*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*' The fasts of the Church—the Friday fast, etc.—these have a moral purpose apart from their obligation. They provide us with the weekly self-discipline which is a continual training in self-control. We do not know how much we lose morally and spiritually by neglecting the fasts. '*Take heed to thyself.*' Our Lord fasted before entering on His ministry. What a lesson to us! And yet we too often venture forth, undisciplined by fasting, unsanctified by prayer to the great conflict with Satan. No wonder that the priest falls: '*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*'

III. Consider, lastly, personal devotion. Private morning prayer, how often hurried and even omitted! our preparations for Holy Communion, often difficult for the priest, yet how all-momentous, as preparing us for that personal union with our Lord! '*He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*'—in God's sight, not in man's; the thing to aim at being 'A name to live before God,' for He is our life. Yea! for '*with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light.*'

Address VII.

Rev. iii. 7-14.

THE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS.

We come now to consider the message to the Church of Philadelphia, and here our blessed Lord seems to take occasion to emphasise and explain the nature and the certainty of the reward promised by Him to true faithfulness.

Consider, first, the special interest and history of the Philadelphian Church. (1) No city of Asia suffered more, we are told, or so much from violent and often-recurring earthquakes. (2) The Church was low and weak in earthly things: '*Thou hast little strength*' (so Archbishop Trench). We learn from the Apostolical Constitutions that its Bishop was one Demetrius, and that he had been appointed to his office by St. John. (3) There is mention made of Jewish adversaries—'*the synagogue of Satan*' (as in the Church of Smyrna). But here the promise is even fuller than to Smyrna. The Jews should not only be subdued, but converted, so as to join in worship with the Church at Philadelphia. In connection with this promise Archbishop Trench refers to an interesting passage in the Epistle of St. Ignatius to this same Philadelphian Church,* which implies the actual presence in the midst of it of converts from Judaism, who now preached the faith which once they persecuted. (4) The permanence of this Church. '*I will keep thee from the power of temptation.*' '*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of*

* *Vide* p. 187.

My God.' 'A pillar.' This implies a promise of permanence. It may be contrasted with the term candlestick, which is removable, whilst a pillar is permanent. There may also be implied some contrast with the outward destructions, earthquakes, etc. (5) It is deeply interesting to note that, amid the general ruin of these Churches, Philadelphia 'still retains a Christian population, and has several Churches'; and, again, 'Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy, or courage. . . . Among the Greek colonies and Churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins.'* '*A pillar in the temple of my God.*'

Special Point: The Permanent Fruit of a Faithful Ministry.

What are the tokens of this fruit?

I. Outward disadvantages and hindrances overruled. We see it was so in the Philadelphian Church. The poorest and the weakest in outward things is the strongest in spiritual things: '*God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.*' We may have many disadvantages, find little support, be ourselves uninfluential, and experience many disappointments; we may have uncongenial work, may have to shepherd an irresponsive flock, see no apparent fruit, gain no honour or name, may be poor and weak, but our disadvantages need be no necessary discouragement. They are to teach us to lean more upon God, for '*My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*' '*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?*'

* Archbishop Trench's 'Commentary,' pp. 180 and 198.

II. Opposition not only silenced, but transformed into friendship. So at Philadelphia in the case of the Jews. '*I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*' Surely a frequent experience in a faithful, patient, waiting ministry. Have we not known it? Spiritual enemies made friends: '*They that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.*' The greatness of the triumph consisting not in the casting out of enemies, but in their transformation. '*He which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.*'

III. The permanence of fruit. '*I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.*' The power of a faithful ministry looks on to the day of Christ when souls shall be gathered in for whom we have toiled: '*Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me.*' The end. The blissful issue, when all we have striven for, all we have prayed for, all we have aspired after, will be ours—when we shall know even as we are known, and '*shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*'

Address VIII.

Rev. iii. 14 to end.

The Danger of Lukewarmness.

We dwelt this morning on the reward of true faithfulness, and the permanence of its fruits, as exhibited in the message to Philadelphia. In the message to the angel of the Church of Laodicea, which closes the series, we are confronted with a very different state of things, and our

thoughts are turned away, as if in sharp contrast, from the reward of faithfulness to the great peril of lukewarmness and indifference. But how common the danger, how needful the warning! '*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.*'

There are some interesting and significant incidents in the history of the Laodicean Church.

I. The angel, or bishop, was probably the Archippus mentioned by St. Paul (Col. iv. 17). He may have been, it is supposed, the son of Philemon (see also Philemon verse 2). It is noticeable that St. Paul's exhortation to Archippus in Col. iv. 17—'*Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it*'—falls in with this warning in the book of the Revelation against lukewarmness.

II. Notice the outward prosperity of the Church. Like Sardis, it had no special foes or difficulties. These two Churches were exempt from the persecutions which harassed the rest, and both grew inwardly cold. '*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*' So here: '*I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.*' What are these riches? Partly the outward prosperity of the city; but also Laodicea was abundantly rich in spiritual privileges, which, like the privilege of a 'State Church,' depend on outward favour or protection. But outward prosperity did not save it. '*My kingdom is not of this world.*'

III. Notice the utter ruin of the Church: '*I will spue thee out of My mouth.*' 'It is certain that the Church at Laodicea was in somewhat later times, so far as man's eye could see, in a flourishing condition. In numbers it

increased so much that its Bishop obtained metropolitan dignity; and in 361 an important Church Council, (that in which the Canon of Scripture was finally settled,) was held at Laodicea, and thence derives its name. But this, at best, was only a transient revival. All has perished now. . . . "Of this once famous Church nothing survives. Recent travellers with difficulty discovered one or two Christians in the poor village which stands upon the site occupied by Laodicea of old"' (Archbishop Trench's 'Commentary').*

What a warning to the Church and to us as priests!

Special Point: The Dangers of a Lukewarm Spirit.

I. Consider the danger to a Church of outward privilege and wealth—*e.g.*, of an Established Church like the Church of England—'*I am rich and increased with goods*'—the danger of dependence upon outward things, upon '*the arm of flesh*,' endowments, standing, rank, etc.

II. Consider, on the other hand, the blessedness of trial and persecution. We often lament the oppositions, strifes, troubles of the Church in these days; but, after all, these are really our safety-valves, the counterpoise to prosperity and its dangers, the purification from indifference, the trying of our '*gold in the fire*.' '*The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*.' Or, again: '*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His*

* *Vide* p. 201.

glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.'

III. Consider, further, the danger to the individual priest. Search yourselves as to lukewarmness. Is there not a real danger in an easy, prosperous, comfortable ministry, in some pleasant position, with home and friends and no great trials, no opposition? Has it not been true of priests under such circumstances—'*The love of many*' has waxed '*cold*'? Perhaps they have even become faithless to our Lord, cold and self-loving. '*Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray Me. . . . Lord, is it I?*'

IV. Remember that the growth of the lukewarm spirit is subtle and gradual. It is not like any great sin or evil habit, apparent. '*I would thou wert either cold or hot.*' '*Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*' The advance of this spirit is so imperceptible. And sometimes growing years, chilling past enthusiasm, bring it on, sometimes circumstances, sometimes temperament. Is it so with any one of us? We need to watch against apathy, want of energy, reluctance in effort. '*We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*' '*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*'

V. Never forget, either, the enervating influence on the whole character of a lukewarm, apathetic spirit. It dissolves all the energies of the soul till there is no power left to meet any strong temptation or to endure any great trial: '*In time of temptation they fall away.*' Unfit to stand in any crisis: '*The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.*'

In Retreat we should make special resolutions to stir ourselves up from this lukewarmness and apathy, in what-

ever special form we may be in danger of its creeping over us—*e.g.*, (1) Love of ease; (2) light reading; (3) dislike to trouble; (4) coldness and weariness in devotion, etc. '*I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, . . . and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*' '*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*'

Address IX.

THE GLORIOUS PROMISES OF THE FUTURE.

During our Retreat we have been glancing at various counsels and warnings to the priest suggested by our Lord's messages to the angels of the Seven Churches. One very interesting feature remains on which we have scarcely touched: the promise made to each of the Churches—the glorious reward awaiting the faithful in each. As now we have reached the closing address, we may fitly contemplate this feature. There is a promise attached to each message.

1. To Ephesus—of the tree of life in Paradise.
2. To Smyrna—of the victory over the second death.
3. To Pergamos—of the hidden manna.
4. To Thyatira—of power over the nations.
5. To Sardis—of the vesture of the white raiment.
6. To Philadelphia—of the everlasting dwelling-place in the temple.
7. To Laodicea—of the session on the throne of Christ.

There are various interpretations of these promises.

Archbishop Trench in his 'Commentary,' to which I have referred before, notes a gradation or sequence in them, as God's revelation has been developed, the first four carrying us back to the order of the Old Testament history, Paradise, death, the Mosaic period (manna), the kingly period (power over nations), the last three looking onward to the Christian Church and its future; the white raiment of the redeemed, the temple in heaven, the throne of our Lord. Another interpretation is given by Dr. Lee in the 'Speaker's Commentary.' He thinks that the seven promises shadow out under a sevenfold aspect the total or full blessedness of the redeemed and of the perfected and sanctified Church, immortality, victory over death, the sacramental food and priestly life, the royalty of the redeemed, the purity of the white raiment, the heavenly temple, the throne of God and of Christ. '*He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.*'

Either interpretation is very fruitful in its significance. Let us gather up one or two concluding thoughts or counsels.

I. The sacramental promise. *The tree of life, the hidden manna,* throws a light over our sacramental life here on earth.

(*a*) The Bread of life—participation: '*I am the Bread of Life.*' '*My Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven.*' The life of Christ in us: '*Christ liveth in me.*' We feed upon Him. We assimilate His nature, we are transformed into His likeness, '*Changed into the same image.*' '*He shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation*' (R.V.). Thus '*we shall see Him as He is*' no more in mystery or in sacrament, but '*face to face.*'

(*b*) Our earthly communions, their gradual fruit, the transformation of our nature, the heavenly retrospect.

'*As for me, when I shall behold Thy Presence in righteousness*,' and '*when I shall wake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it*.'

II. The promise of dominion: '*Power over the nations*.' (*a*) The final supremacy of good, the victory of the Church over the powers of evil, over sin; the mystical Body made perfect in Christ: '*All things shall be subdued unto Him*.' Evil purged from the whole creation, the Church sharing the dominion. '*He hath put all things in subjection under His feet*.' As St. Paul intimates: '*Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory*.' (*b*) Our earthly weakness changed into strength. Temptation, sin, suffering, death, each one shall triumph over these. Oh! blessed issue, when no more conflict but eternal rest, because no more evil within or without. '*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.' '*There shall be no more death*.' Such an one shall then be '*a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out*.'

III. The promise of the temple and the throne. This leads us on in thought to dwelling in the sanctuary of God Himself, implying perfect sanctity, and perfect glory: '*They are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple*.'

(*a*) Think once, again, of our earthly ministries in His temple, shadows of that eternal ministering and a preparation for the ministry on high. What a constrast between the ministry here and there!—(1) *Here* imperfect, fitful, interrupted, *there* unceasing: '*They rest nor day nor night*.' (2) *Here* with many spots and stains, *there* in the robe that is *washed*—the '*white raiment*.' (3) *Here* in cloud and mystery, *there* in perfect light: '*There shall be no night there*.'

(*b*) The earthly union consummated: '*To sit with Him on His throne.*' Perfect union and incorporation. '*If we suffer, we shall reign with Him.*' '*His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.*' May we also, in the Office of the earthly priesthood, have so served Christ, that we may be counted worthy to serve Him hereafter in the glorious worship and the everlasting ministries of the temple in heaven, standing before the golden altar '*in white raiment*' bearing the palms of victory in our hands, and so fulfil His own desire for each one of us: '*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.*'

Notes of Addresses given at a Retreat for Clergy at Cuddesdon, 1890.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

I PROPOSE, my brethren, to take for our special meditation in Retreat the Seventeenth Chapter of the Gospel of St. John. One approaches, indeed, with awe and humble reverence these sublime words of our Lord's own prayer before His Passion: '*These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.*'

And so we fitly begin with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, committing ourselves to His guidance, who alone can lead our steps through this sacred vestibule of the Passion into the depths of the heart of our Lord, into the mystery of His unfathomable love. Truly may it be said to us, as we now begin to muse on this sacred scene—the scene of the altar of the Cross—to meditate on the high-priestly prayer, the great oblation and the great consecration, '*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*'

O Blessed Spirit, guide Thou us into all the truth. Teach Thou us all things, and make known to us that love

of Christ '*which passeth knowledge*,' '*that we may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings*.'

And here let me make two brief remarks by way of introduction.

I. The subject of this Chapter takes us naturally into deep waters, to the deep sources of spiritual life and light. We touch upon mystery in every verse, we seem to hear the voice of the Lord Himself speaking to us in every word. We find ourselves admitted to the inner circle of His own, and listening in the great crisis of His earthly life to His closing words. Yea more: we are taken in, as it were, to the very sanctuary of His heart and the aspirations of that heart which knew no sin, and its own inner communings with the Eternal Father are breathed forth in our hearing. We stand by or kneel at His side while He prays aloud to God. Thus our minds are drawn aside from ordinary topics—the cares, the interests, the perplexities which beset our daily path. At first sight there is a disadvantage in this.

In Retreat we often look for something which shall touch upon the cares and anxieties that press upon us day by day, some solution of difficulties, some counsel for the present burden of the heart or perplexity of the mind. '*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*' But this disadvantage is only an apparent one. Against it must be set the blessing of a pause, a breathing time. '*Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile*.'

Above all, the inner, deeper, spiritual truths which take us out of ourselves into a higher region of thought, into the deeps of the spiritual being, into the very atmosphere of the Divine Presence, though at first they seem not to touch our lives in their ordinary currents, yet do silently and gradually influence the whole spirit and

temper of our minds, and we find afterwards that though they have not at the moment removed our immediate difficulties, they have cleared our spiritual vision, and opened the eye and the ear of the soul to discern those things which *belong unto our peace*. They have planted our feet on a higher level, from which, as from a vantage-ground, we can survey calmly all our position, and see through the clouds of doubt and perplexity that hang about our daily path. Our whole moral and spiritual attitude is raised. We are braced and strengthened in spirit, so as to be better able to cope with the difficulties of our life. '*He that is spiritual judgeth* (or discerneth) *all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*'

II. A second remark is this: All the topics of this sublime prayer bear intimately upon the life of the priest. Its leading ideas are interwoven into the whole priestly life: (1) Self-oblation; (2) self-consecration; (3) sacramental union; (4) intercession for the Church and the world; (5) the power of faith; (6) the vision of the Master's glory hereafter. All are subjects which come home to and find a place in the heart of the true priest. '*I sanctify*' (I consecrate) '*Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*'

I shall endeavour in each meditation to suggest some one point in the priestly life on which especially to fix our thoughts. May God so bless our communing together in this Retreat that the image of His dear Son, '*the High Priest of our profession*,' may be stamped henceforth on our priestly lives, '*bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*'

III. Then, as our concluding thought, realise the special purpose of Retreat as a message from God. '*Speak, Lord,*

for Thy servant heareth.' There must be an attitude of preparation; make ready the heart. '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say.*' The elements of preparation are: (1) A penitent spirit: '*I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.*' (2) Brave resolution: '*Be strong and of a good courage.*' (3) Trustfulness and calmness: '*I look for the Lord; My soul doth wait for Him; in His Word is my trust.*' '*I know Whom I have believed.*'

So may He bring home His message to each soul and the special benediction of His love and peace.

Address I.

St. John xvii. 2.

THE GREAT PURPOSE OF THE FATHER.

This verse reveals in bold and striking outlines the great purpose of the Father towards mankind. Let us follow now these lines of thought:

I. The supremacy of the Son of Man as the new Head of redeemed humanity. '*Thou hast given Him power over all flesh.*' This was fulfilled at the Ascension, which our Lord already anticipates. Our Lord always looks through the Passion to His glorification: '*The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.*'

So in the prophetic Psalm viii.: '*What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man that Thou visitest him? . . . Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands, Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*' So also St. Paul: '*The last Adam is a quickening*

spirit.' Our dear Lord Himself lays claim to this prerogative in the crisis of His Passion: '*Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power.*'

II. The life-giving Head: '*As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.*' '*All flesh*'—all mankind, not angels, or other orders of created life; mankind in its fallen and helpless condition: '*He took on Him the seed of Abraham.*' '*The Son of Man.*' '*Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.*'

The great purpose and power of the Incarnation is the renewing, strengthening, quickening of the fallen life:—the imparting of the Divine Life. '*Partakers of the Divine nature.*' '*Renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him.*' The original purpose of God, independent of the Fall, to make man divine by ever-increasing communications of the Divine nature, is thus fulfilled in Christ: '*To them gave He power to become the sons of God.*'

III. The universality of the purpose: '*To all flesh*'—all mankind. This universal purpose is often referred to—*e.g.*, '*God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*' '*Go ye and teach all nations.*' Not merely all Israel, but all mankind. Yet the purpose is limited by conditions: '*To as many as received Him.*' The offer is universal, the acceptance conditional; and that not only by God's predestination, but by man's will. The great and magnificent purpose of the Father is '*to gather together in one all things in Christ, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*'

Special Points.

I. The office of the priest is to communicate, to hand on the message of life. The priest is Christ's representative: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*' What a high prerogative! We may draw out the thought thus: This prerogative is of God's appointment. It is the gift of God—the direct appointment of our Lord: '*Thou gavest Him authority.*' This authority is handed on to priests: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*'

II. The priesthood is a direct call and commission from God. Consider the powers of the commission: '*God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*' 'RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST FOR THE OFFICE AND WORK OF A PRIEST' (see Ordinal). Have we realised this? Do we fulfil our daily work and ministry in the constant realisation of this? O my soul, what is it to be a priest of God! What a call for personal sanctity in the priest! Our Lord's work as the Great High Priest was effectual through His perfect oneness with the Father, His perfect conformity to the Divine will: '*I do always those things that please Him.*'

The unsanctified life of a priest is a spiritual anomaly, frustrating the purpose of God—a savour of death and not of life to men's souls; the unsurrendered, undevoted, or half-devoted will and heart hinder and neutralise the full flow of Divine grace and life. Here we may find subjects for self-examination—(1) Our example and influence. (2) Our secret sins. (3) Our self-will and self-pleasing. (4) Our slothfulness. (5) Our want of true devotion. What have they wrought in us and in

the souls whom God hath given us? '*Be ye holy, for I am holy.*'

III. There must also be in a true priest a realised dependence upon God. Sanctity flows from constant waiting upon God: '*Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven.*' This is often recorded of our Blessed Lord. The priest must live day by day in this uninterrupted upward gaze—'*Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord*'—in each separate detail of his work. Ever realise this: '*Not I, but Christ liveth in Me.*' '*It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you.*'

Address II.

St. John xvii. 3.

THE ESSENCE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

In the next verse there follows a description of the eternal life, which is God's gift in Christ: '*This is life eternal.*'

Pass on now to consider in meditation the essence of eternal life as here described by Our Blessed Lord: '*This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God.*' It is only possible to touch on certain points of this most pregnant description.

I. The Incarnation is the manifestation of the true God, '*the only true God*' as distinct from the vain figments of human idolatry. As St. Paul says: '*Though there be that are called gods many . . . to us there is but one God the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ.*' By It the true Nature of God is unfolded: '*No man hath seen God at*

any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.' First, the Unity of God; secondly, the Personality of God; thirdly, the Fatherhood of God; fourthly, the Love of God towards men—all manifested by the Incarnation. Man is to address God as the great Father: '*Our Father Which art in heaven.*'

II. We are to consider the progressive knowledge of God in Christ: '*That they may know Thee.*' Note the present tense—continuance, progress, not completed knowledge. And this by the Spirit guiding into all truth. All light which true science and true criticism can shed upon the Nature of God is to be gladly welcomed as the ages advance, and in their progress reveal in new and, it may be, fuller relations the Divine Being and His Person. So, in the spiritual life, the individual soul is ever growing in the fuller knowledge of the Divine Person: '*Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*'

III. Think also of the character of this knowledge. It is well explained by Bishop Westcott: 'Knowledge in this connection expresses the apprehension of the truth by the whole nature of man. It is not an acquaintance with facts as external, nor an intellectual conviction of their reality, but an appropriation of them (so to speak) as an influencing power into the very being of Him Who "knows" them.'

We may, I think, go further, and as the later verses of this sublime prayer seem to develop the sense, we may say the true knowledge of God is union with God in Christ: '*I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.*' Man appropriates God, assimilates God, is united

with God till he is perfected by union with God. And *this is life eternal*—the life of God flowing into man by virtue of the union with God in Christ: '*I in them and Thou in Me.*' '*Because I live ye shall live also.*'

How wonderfully all this illustrates sacramental truth! The very purpose and meaning of Sacraments: channels of the life of God. At this very time the great High Priest, in the first Eucharist, is offering the perfect oblation of Himself, consecrating Himself in the one Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Special Points.

I. The office of the priest is not only to hand on, but to explain the message, *life eternal*, its nature and conditions,—the great truths of faith and life. In the teaching of the priest there is a danger of making too much of current or occasional topics, relating anecdotes in sermons, etc. But all permanent edification must be grounded on the great truths of the Gospel, however they may be illustrated. '*Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*' '*Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.*'

II. Consider the closeness of the sacramental union. Eternal life is only by union with God, '*the well of life.*' Not knowledge, nor faith, nor feeling only, but union—union with the Person of Christ. '*Because I live, ye shall live also.*' In our sacramental teaching great stress should be laid on this purpose of the Sacraments as the channel of communication of the Divine life: '*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life.*' '*He that eateth Me even he shall live by Me.*'

III. The priest's own life in Christ. Is it not often our

own failure to realise the Divine life in its depth and fulness, and the feebleness of our own personal union with Christ, which are the causes of our imperfect teaching in this matter? We do not know Christ and live in Him in this deep sense, and so we fail to teach this union and this life to others; or we teach it artificially, with no experience of it ourselves, and it makes no impression.

Let us ask ourselves these questions in Retreat: What is our own life in Christ? What is our experience of Christ living in us? What is the power of the eternal life in us? Are we able to make it known to others as our own experience, as that which we *have seen and heard* ourselves? '*We speak that we do know.*' '*Come and see.*' Let us look for the marks of the presence of this power in our lives: (1) Purification from sin: '*He that abideth in Him sinneth not.*' (2) Self-sacrifice: '*Live not to ourselves, but to Him.*' (3) A conformed will: '*Not My will, but Thine.*' (4) The supreme aim of life: '*Christ . . . magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.*' '*Whom have I in heaven but Thee?*'

Address III.

St. John xvii. 4.

THE PERFECTED WORK ON EARTH.

Our Blessed Lord now looks back on this closing evening of His life on earth upon the work He had done upon earth in fulfilling the purpose of the Father: '*I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished* (perfected) *the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*'

In this retrospect three great features of the work stand out prominently: (1) The manifestation of the Father: '*I have glorified Thee.*' (2) The completeness of the earthly work: *I have finished* (perfected). (3) This work appointed of the Father: '*which Thou gavest Me to do.*'

Dwell a little on each aspect as a groundwork for our present meditation.

I. And first there is the manifestation of the Father: '*I have glorified Thee on the earth.*' Our Lord looks back on His earthly Ministry and its great purpose. As Incarnate God on earth, He had revealed the Presence of God among men, the Nature of God, the Character of God, the Relation of God to men. He had not sought to glorify Himself, but had been a witness to man of the glory of the Father. He was the visible Impersonation of God. God in Him was *manifest in the Flesh*, manifest in His true Nature and Character. And so He said: '*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*'

Observe our Lord does not dwell directly on the saving of souls, or His teaching, or His efforts, or His manifold and wonderful works for man, but simply on the fact of the manifesting of God to man as *the Father*. For this is the great power of salvation, the revealed relation of God as the Father of His creation, of all mankind.

Notice the importance in our own ministry of this consideration. We must hold up to men the Fatherhood of God and all the unspeakable attraction of the Father's love, and not dwell merely on the saving of souls: '*I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons.*'

II. Consider, secondly, the completed work on earth, not the ending or finishing merely, but the perfectedness of His work: '*I have glorified Thee on the earth.*' This

was finished, this was perfected; not finished only, but finished perfectly: '*I have finished the work.*'

Another work lay before Him which would open out at the Ascension, the work in heaven which would develop and perpetuate the finished earthly work. To this the Lord afterwards makes allusion, as He had already in the preceding chapters: '*Now . . . I come to Thee.*'

Whatever in our priesthood may be given us to do hereafter when we have passed within the Veil, remember, my brothers, we have a distinct work to do on earth, which must be completed here: '*I have glorified Thee on the earth.*'

III. The work is not self-chosen, but appointed: '*The work which Thou gavest Me to do.*' This feature of His work our Lord is ever bringing out prominently throughout all His Ministry. There is a remarkable reiteration of this truth from the very beginning: '*Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God.*' '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*' Even to the last, and especially in the great crisis, the great summing up of His earthly Ministry: '*The Cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*' '*Not My will, but Thine be done.*' '*I have finished*—in labour and in suffering—*the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*'

Observe the great importance in our ministry of realising our work as an appointed work. The original call is from God, and the special sphere, with its trials and its blessings, small or great, is also from God. Here we have the cure of restlessness, of self-choosing, and self-seeking: '*I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*' Such is the outline of our meditation.

Special Points.

I. The perfectness or completeness required in our work. There must be care and painstaking in small duties. Mark the danger of despising small things. Do all thoroughly. Avoid hurrying over any work merely to get it done. Our duty is not only to do it, but to do it perfectly—*e.g.*, the giving of a simple address to a few people, the teaching a class at school, or a Confirmation class, the dealing with a child or a tiresome invalid, or a good-for-nothing lad. Each one of these is a work which God has given us to do; each must be done perfectly for His sake: '*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*'

II. Another point of great importance is the ministry to individual souls. Especially in large parishes we must remember the need of time and care for single souls. The time spent by our Blessed Lord on individuals is very noticeable—*e.g.*, the inquirer Nicodemus, the sinner Mary Magdalene, the worldly Publican, the faithful Nathaniel, the penitent St. Peter, the dying thief on the cross. The imperfectness of our work often arises from dealing with men only in the mass and from neglect of details. Time and care bestowed on counsel or in hearing confessions is no waste of time. Thought and prayer are well spent for each. Each regenerate soul is a centre of life and grace. '*There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*'

III. Consider, lastly, the importance of rule and system. This is often the secret of completeness, and the want of it makes all incomplete. It is very difficult to some temperaments, but try to make it a matter of effort, of

resolution, and of prayer. There must be a rule of life, the duties of each day mapped out: (1) Time for prayer; (2) time for recreation (reading the newspaper or light literature); (3) time for devotional reading, the study of Holy Scripture or a spiritual book. How much of our incompleteness is due to our want of system, and an unregulated life! How much of study, even in the busiest outward life, may be got through in a year by a little system! Remember the words of St. Paul: '*I therefore so run not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beateth the air.*'

Address IV.

St. John xvii. 5.

THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SON.

We pass on to-day to another great feature in the High Priestly prayer—the glorifying of the Son. This great thought, like the other, pervades the prayer; in the opening verse, '*Glorify Thy Son*,' and then in verse 5, '*And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me*,' and as the prayer develops this glory is communicated to His disciples: '*The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.*' Two remarks occur by way of preparation for our meditation, for we notice that here the glory of the Son is exhibited under a twofold aspect.

I. The pre-existing and eternal glory of the Son: '*Glorify Thy Son*,' as Son of God. '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*' That glory of which He had emptied Himself for

a while, but which was now to be resumed—the glory of the Son of God: '*Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*'

II. There was the glory of His perfect risen and ascended Manhood. '*The Son of Man in His glory.*' '*Glorify Thy Son,*' as Son of Man. '*The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them,*' as the Incarnate Son, that glory of the Divine Humanity on which St. Paul dwells: '*God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow.*'

So the two aspects combine to represent the fulness of the glory of the Son, the glory of the perfect Manhood taken into God, into the pre-existing glory of the Eternal Word. This glory consists in the revelation of the Person of Christ—*i.e.*, the unfolding of the great mystery of the Incarnation and of the Person of the Incarnate God.

The Person of Christ is presented under three aspects:

(*a*) As revealed to His disciples: '*They have known surely that I came out from Thee.*'

(*b*) As revealed age after age to the Church, in greater fulness and in ever-varying aspects, the same revelation, the same faith, through heresies, through conflicts, with the advancing knowledge of the world, by the progress of all true science, by the results of all sound criticism, all developing from one side or the other, in new and ever-multiplying relations, the Person of the Incarnate Son, as the source of all life and the key to all history: '*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.*' '*That,*' as St. Paul writes, '*in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things*

in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.'

(*c*) As made known and communicated in Sacraments. The sacramental Union with the Person of Christ is dwelt upon by our Blessed Lord in this great prayer of consecration: '*I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.*' So the revelation of the Person of Christ is through His Indwelling Presence, through participation of the life that is in Him: '*In Him was life*'—*i.e.*, in His Person, and '*the life was the light of men.*' Not merely an intellectual perception, nor an interpretation of external facts (though both of these are included), but an interior knowledge and experience, a very union with God, and in that union a participation of the life of God and of the light of God: '*How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us?*' '*He was known of them in breaking of bread.*' Such is the outline of our meditation.

Special Point.

The Priest as the Representative of Christ. '*I in them,*' manifested in, reproduced, represented by them, and this in various ways:

(*a*) As the bearers of God's message of love to man: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*' As St. Paul says, '*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.*' How far are we faithful to our trust, to our embassy, as the Lord's messengers? At every time, in every place, in the sanctuary, at the altar, by the bedside, in the school, in the class, in recreation, are we careful to represent Christ so that He can say of us, '*I in them,*' and more, '*I am glorified in them*'?

(*b*) We represent Him as we try to cultivate the characteristics of His life. The marks of Christ's ministry to men are reproduced in the lives of His priests in proportion as His Divine Life is assimilated by them. Strive to imitate the Divine patience: '*All the day long have I stretched out My hands*'; the Divine silence: '*He answered nothing*'; the unwearied, unappreciated toil: '*He went about doing good*,' though '*the world knew Him not*'; the perfect consecration of the whole life to God: '*I sanctify Myself*.'

(*c*) In the sacrifice of self. Here we touch the very essence of our representation of Christ. The life of the priest is a life of self-sacrifice. Thank God! how many noble instances we have had in the English Church of late years! It is shown in the sacrifice of all that is dear to the flesh—home, affections, marriage, natural tastes—that all may be given to God. This is a growing idea of the priesthood: '*What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ*.' '*Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My Name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life*.'

(*d*) Another token is the quiet endurance of suffering, disappointments, weariness, failing health, secret sorrows and crosses, for the Master's sake. '*I am crucified with Christ*.' So is He glorified in us. '*I am glorified in them*.'

Address V.

St. John xvii. 11-15.

THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

The Divine prayer now takes a new departure. From Himself and the revelation of His Person our Lord goes on to the future of His Church, and the great thought now is this—the guardianship of His Church. '*I pray for them.*' '*Keep through Thine Own Name those whom Thou hast given Me.*' '*Keep them from the evil.*' Dwell on this in our present meditation; and first, the need of this guardianship is developed. The need is two-fold.

I. Because of their separation from Christ: '*I am no more in the world but these are in the world.*' '*Now I come to Thee.*' The outward protection is withdrawn: '*While I was with them in the world I kept them.*' This now is to be replaced by a Divine and spiritual guardianship, vouchsafed through the mediation of the unseen Lord: '*Holy Father, keep through Thine Own Name those whom Thou hast given Me.*'

II. Owing to the position of trial in which they were left: '*These are in the world.*' How much is signified here! They would be exposed to all its evil influences, its manifold perils! Moreover, the world is dominated by the Prince of Darkness, by the power of the wicked one, the kingdom of the evil one. So our Lord prays: '*Not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil*' (the evil one)—*i.e.*, out of the whole domain of the devil. Observe our Lord's apprecia-

tion of the great dangers and trials of His Church in this evil world. Dwell on this in times of discouragement: '*The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath.*'

Consider the power of this Guardianship. This is unfolded in the remarkable utterance of the prayer in verse 11: '*Holy Father, keep through Thine Own Name those whom Thou hast given Me,*' or, as the Revised Version, following the most authoritative text, renders the words, '*Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me.*' What is the meaning of this petition, '*Keep in Thy Name*'? The Name of the Father is the revelation of God as Father. The commission was given to Christ by the Father to reveal His Name, His Divine Nature to man. It is the revelation of this great truth which our Lord prays may be kept before the mind of His Church in all ages—the true Character of God, the revelation of the Father by the Incarnate Son. This would be the sure ground of the safety of the Church. This would unite them one to another in the unity of God, in the Fatherhood of God, amid all perils and conflicts here: '*That they may be one, even as We are One.*' So the Divine prayer seems to be for the maintenance of faith in the Incarnation, and Its purpose through all ages as the one centre of all spiritual truth and the source of all spiritual life to the Church for ever: '*That they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.*'

Special Point.

The Priest in Intercession. Our Lord, the great High Priest, here prays for His Church: '*Keep them in Thy Name.*' Let us draw out this thought.

(*a*) Intercession at the Holy Sacrifice. Our Lord is here

offering Himself, instituting the Blessed Sacrament. Let us show greater care and diligence as regards this point, my brothers, in Celebrating. We should prepare a list of intercessions—those to whom we have ministered, or are called to minister, those in sorrow or near to death, those who have asked our prayers and are in danger and temptation. The priest should be able to say in every Celebration, '*I pray for them.*'

(*b*) There should be times for intercession in addition to the Holy Eucharist. In our devotional life a due place should be allotted to it. System and rule are to be observed in it. There is a special unselfishness in intercessory prayer, and there are also special difficulties. Besides this great Eucharistic prayer, our Lord departs at certain times into the mountains or to a solitary place to pray before each great crisis in His life, as in choosing the Twelve; in the Agony; on the Cross: '*Father, keep them.*' '*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name He will give it you.*'

(*c*) We must care for individual and special needs. Our Lord prayed, no doubt, for each one of the twelve, for each one in their separate need, as for St. Peter: '*I have prayed for thee.*' Bishop Hamilton, in his long illness, with a map of his diocese unfolded before him, used to pray for each parish. Bishop Wordsworth, with a list of Confirmation candidates before him, was found on his knees interceding for each one. We are too general in our intercessions and too vague. We need more personal interest, more individual care. Pray for each soul, pray for souls by name, '*making mention of them.*' We ought to be able to say to each one, '*I have prayed for thee.*'

Address VI.

St. John xvii. 17.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH.

From protection our Lord passes on to a still higher thought, the consecration of His Church: '*Sanctify them in the truth*' (R.V.).

I. His Church is to be not only guarded, but consecrated. One of the great purposes of the Incarnation was to consecrate human nature to God in all its faculties and powers. So the Church for the due fulfilment of her mission in the world needs not only protection from the power of evil, but more, the entire consecration of her members to the service of God. God's work among men is to be carried on, not merely by deliverance from evil (protection), but through consecrated lives. So our Blessed Lord says to His Apostles, speaking of His great purpose of regeneration for mankind, '*Ye are the salt of the earth.*' '*Ye are the light of the world.*'

II. This consecration is to be '*in the truth.*' Here a further idea is introduced: not only sanctity but truth (as before our Lord had dwelt upon unity, '*that they may be one*'). You will notice that in reference to the Church these three cardinal ideas pervade this great prayer of oblation—truth, unity, sanctity. The Church is to be united in the truth and sanctified in the truth. Not by any kind of union, but by union '*in the truth.*' This is not a self-chosen consecration, but a consecration within the sphere and by the power of revealed truth.

Notice the importance according to our Lord's mind

of objective truth, as forming the source and ground of real union and real consecration. These three ideas are prominent in the Prayer in the Communion Office for the Church militant: 'That they may agree in the truth of Thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.'

III. Our Lord's own consecration of Himself is the source and power of all human consecration: '*I consecrate Myself*' (R.V., margin) (dedicate Myself in perfect self-sacrifice) '*that they also might be consecrated.*' All human consecration is the fruit of union with the consecrated One, with Him '*Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world.*' Our Lord here comes back again to His own Person, the Person of the Incarnate, the source of all holiness. It is the life in Him communicating itself to those who are united with Him and making them partakers of His own holiness: '*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*' '*I am the Light of the world.*' '*The Way, the Truth, and the Life.*' '*Because I live, ye shall live also.*'

Special Point.

'The Priest in Consecration.' One great idea goes through this high priestly prayer—our Lord's one Oblation of Himself, once offered, and perpetually presented in the great Memorial Ordinance of His Church. The offering of the Holy Sacrifice is the distinctive office of the priest. How are we fulfilling it? What, my brothers, shall be in the Great Day the account of our Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist? Follow in meditation the lines of our Lord's thought.

I. The consecration of ourselves. If we offer as Christ offered, we must consecrate ourselves. There are two aspects of self-consecration: (*a*) A consecrated life: '*Be ye*

holy, for I am holy.' '*He offered Himself without spot to God.*' (*b*) The sacrifice of every power, faculty, and gift to His service; concentrating all in Him, not narrowing, but intensifying our efforts: '*I consecrate Myself, that they also may be consecrated.*' For our people's sake counting all things but loss for Christ.

II. Our definite preparation. What a preparation for His Sacrifice did our Blessed Lord condescend to make! His whole life was one great preparation for the great act of self-oblation: '*How am I straitened till it be accomplished.*' Nor must we neglect to look at our Lord in another aspect as the great Penitent, bearing the sins of the world. Penitence is the centre of our preparation. We present before God our sins and the sins of our people. '*I consecrate Myself, that they also may be consecrated.*'

III. Our supernatural life in Christ. In Holy Communion the consecration affects the Presence, and in that Presence is life. He communicates His life to His priests: '*Because I live, ye shall live also.*' The participation of this life is the real strength for our priesthood. We know not how much we miss by omitting frequent daily Celebrations. The life of Christ liveth in us, and should be mighty in us: '*Christ liveth in me.*'

Address VII.

St. John xvii. 9.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

So far we have been chiefly concerned with the revelation of the Incarnate Son in His Church, the protection of His Church, and the consecration of His Church. But our Lord's great prayer of oblation extends its scope beyond the Church. He contemplates the effect of His Divine mission upon the world. At first the world seems excluded: '*I pray for them: I pray not for the world.*' Not that our Lord would limit His love, but that He would point out rather how that love was to reach the world. The consecration of His Church was a condition antecedently necessary to the salvation of the world. So our Lord prays for the Church first, and not for the world directly, but for the world through the Church. Bishop Westcott says well: 'The exclusion of "the world" from Christ's prayer is no limitation of the extent of His love, but a necessary result of the immediate circumstances of the prayer. His work is fulfilled in ever-increasing circles of influence.' The Divine purpose is to embrace all humanity: '*Thou hast given Him power over all flesh.*' The faith of the world in Christ and the knowledge of His Divine mission is dependent on the unity of the Church: '*That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me.*' This is a very fruitful subject of meditation.

I. The unity of the Church is a necessary condition of the success of Christian Missions in the world.

Our dissensions are the great source of the failure of Missions. '*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*'

II. So in narrower spheres—the parish or the home. It is the power of love uniting souls together in those who profess Christ which attracts those that are without. The work of Christ extends in 'ever-increasing circles' through the consecrated lives of His members, on the great principle: '*I consecrate Myself that they also may be consecrated.*' So they, His disciples, in the Church consecrate themselves in love, that the world may be consecrated.

III. This unity is, as has been seen, associated with sanctity and truth. It is not all kinds of unity that will extend the faith and the knowledge of Christ through the world, but that unity which is '*in the truth*' and that unity which is in holiness. Unity, truth, sanctity, are interwoven into that wonderful and complex influence which is to tell so mightily upon the world: '*Sanctify them in the truth*'; '*that they may be one, even as We are One.*'

Observe that the Church, to be true to her mission and true to Christ her Lord, must move on along these three lines, or rather must combine and reflect these three essential elements of the Divine nature and the Divine work—viz., unity, sanctity, truth. The Church must be one as God is One, holy as God is holy, true as God is true.

Notice the two effects of the Church's influence—faith and knowledge. Faith first, knowledge next. Faith in the Divine Revelation precedes the intellectual conviction: 'Non cognovimus et credidimus: credidimus enim ut cognosceremus' (St. Augustine)—'*If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine.*' This is true with individuals, and also in the expansion of the Church's life.

The advancing ages develop and bring out and illustrate by science and criticism the truth originally believed: '*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*'

Special Point.

'The Priest in his Outward Life before the World.' Our blessed Lord implies that part of the priest's duty lies in the world: '*I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world.*' And again: '*As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world.*' Consider, therefore, in the relations of the priest to the world without:

(*a*) The width of his sympathies. Like his Divine Master his outlook must be upon the world, upon mankind. There is the danger of narrowness in the priest, of cliquism or parochialism. He must remember the interests of the whole Church, the state of the masses and the poor, and of the out-lying heathen world. In the spirit of the Master's prayer: '*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.*'

A priest should try to cultivate width of thought—not indifference to truth, but the capacity to see truth from different sides, and to enter into the difficulties of those who are struggling after truth: '*I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some.*'

(*b*) The direction of these sympathies. This is vitally important. Our blessed Lord is our Guide here also. Sympathy must not degenerate into weakness. The priest must be firm in upholding all that is pure, and holy, and honest, and in setting his face like a rock against all

evil in the world—its temper, its selfishness, its hollowness, etc.: '*I pray . . . that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*' Great is the evil of allowing and countenancing moral laxity. The present conditions of society demand great firmness and boldness in priests, and much self-denial, even as regards innocent amusements.

(*c*) The power of this sympathy must be in its consecration: '*I consecrate Myself, that they may be consecrated.*' So width of thought must never imply indifference to dogmatic truth. Its power must be within the sphere of the truth: '*Sanctify them in the truth.*' Neither sympathy nor width of thought will have any permanent or healthful influence if they be severed from holiness and from truth. St. Paul combines the two characteristics of sympathy and of truth when he says not only '*I am made all things to all men,*' but in another place: '*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*'

(*d*) Self-sacrificing love is a power, as with our Lord: '*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.*' So in a measure with the priest. How great is the attraction of an example of self-sacrifice! How it tells upon the world! Even unbelievers are attracted by self-sacrifice. There is ever an unseen power in the life of one who tries to follow the perfect example of Christ, Who '*pleased not Himself.*'

So the priest is to represent Christ before the world. The life of Christ is to be manifested in him: '*All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee. They show the glory of Thy kingdom; and talk of Thy power. That Thy power, Thy glory, and mightiness of Thy kingdom might be known unto men.*'

Address VIII.

St. John xvii. 21.

THE SACRAMENTAL UNION.

In our last Meditation we considered the influence of the Church upon the world in respect of the faith and of the knowledge of Christ, and the action of that influence as the power of her own consecrated life. But the Divine prayer takes us yet a step higher, and gives us a further insight into the mystery of the Divine operation. From the consecration of the Church we are thrown back upon the secret source of that consecration—the vital union between our Lord and His members: '*As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.*'

Let us pass on to consider our Lord's own Life indwelling in His members: '*I in them.*' Their unity, their sanctity, their truth flow from the actual participation of the unity, the sanctity, the truth of the Divine Nature: '*That they may be one even as We are One.*' '*I sanctify Myself that they may be sanctified.*' '*Sanctify them in the truth.*' '*Thy word is truth.*'

As Bishop Westcott has well said: 'The true unity of believers, like the Unity of Persons in the Holy Trinity, with Which it is compared, is offered as something far more than a mere moral unity of purpose, feeling, affection; it is in some mysterious mode which we cannot distinctly apprehend, a vital unity.'

The special circumstances of the Divine prayer throw light upon the mystery. These we cannot leave out of

sight in endeavouring to ascertain its full meaning. Our Lord is offering up Himself. He is at this very time instituting the Blessed Sacrament as the memorial of the Great Sacrifice. We may call this Chapter xvii. the first Prayer for the Church militant, the first Prayer of Oblation, the first Prayer of Consecration. Hence, though it be a mystery not yet distinctly apprehended, we cannot fail to conclude that in the Blessed Sacrament lies somehow the solution of the mystery; that the vital unity, the vital sanctity, the vital truth are communicated to us out of the fulness of Christ; and that the Blessed Sacrament is the method or channel of that communication. For it is, observe, at the time of the Institution that our Lord speaks of this indwelling of Himself in His members: '*I in them.*' This surely is the great fruit and purpose of that great sacramental Ordinance He was then appointing: '*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him.*'

Special Point.

'The Personal Union of the Priest with Christ.' Personal devotion—consider the inestimable importance of the secret life of prayer, the great difficulties in its way, owing to our manifold outward duties and constant interruptions from press of work. Remember, regularity, not abundance of prayers is needed; beware of the danger of substituting outward Offices for secret prayer. Think of these things:

1. The early morning prayer; the daily Offices.
2. The devout preparation for Holy Communion.
3. The mutual relation of self-examination and meditation.

4. Confession, once made, kept up by a fixed rule: '*He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*' Here is found the personal purification of the priest. Personal union with Christ involves personal cleansing: '*He that hath this hope purifieth himself even as He is pure.*' Hindrances to self-purification arise from: (*a*) Sloth, undermining and weakening the whole spiritual life: '*Thou wicked and slothful servant.*' (*b*) Secret impurity, connected often with sloth not vigorously resisted, disturbing and disordering the whole character. Hence the blessedness of real effort, watchfulness and prayer bringing the mighty Help and Presence of the Lord: '*He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.*' Hence, again, the need of secret self-discipline, such as the fasts of the Church and their moral power, and a rule and system of life. There must be a restraint of self for others' sake: '*Who can tell how oft he offendeth?*' '*cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.*'

5. Above all, the transforming virtue of sacramental Communion. Is our sacramental life transforming our lives and raising them into the supernatural order? Is Christ being formed in us, living in us? This is a great question for the priest. The answer depends upon three things: whether there is—

(*a*) Self-cleansing and preparation.

(*b*) A desire after Christ.

(*c*) The life being raised to the level of our Communions, being '*Changed into the same Image.*' '*We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*' '*With Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light.*'

Address IX.

St. John xvii. 24.

THE BEATIFIC VISION.

From the sacramental union on which we have been dwelling we take one step further to that which is the great and final issue—the Beatific Vision: '*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me.*' And it is deeply interesting to notice how our Blessed Lord traces for us the steps or stages of progress to this great issue.

I. The vital union with our Lord, making us partakers of the Divine Nature, conforming us to His likeness, prepares the way for the Vision of God. So St. John intimates: '*It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is.*' The transformation into His likeness is the condition of the Vision. The necessary power of vision for beholding God is sacramental: '*Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*' '*Changed into the same Image.*'

II. Our progress in the knowledge of God: '*O Righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me.*' Not at once and fully, for perfect knowledge of the Father can only be gained step by step: '*I have declared* (made known) *unto them Thy Name, and will declare it.*' 'Made known,' revealed Thy Nature and

Being, 'and will make it known.' The knowledge, the revelation is continuous; it is to be made known progressively, to be filled up and developed and interpreted, as the life of the Church is perfected, and as the life of the individual soul is matured. This is the special office of the Holy Ghost which our Lord had been promising: '*He shall guide you into all truth.*' '*He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*' '*He shall testify of Me.*' '*He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you.*' '*He will show you things to come.*' The revelation is developed: '*From glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*' The development and interpretation of truth is to the end the work of the Abiding Spirit.

III. This gradual transformation into His likeness is not external, not merely intellectual, but experimental and spiritual:—God brought home to man's spiritual nature by the Holy Ghost; an assimilation of God till that nature is transformed and made Divine: '*That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*'

Observe this great purpose is the gradual transformation of the individual life. One great end of Sacraments, one vast fruit of Divine Communion, is the nature transformed, the heart purified, the will consecrated by the participation of Christ. Is His life manifested in us? The virtues and graces of His Divine character, are they developing in our character? Can it be said '*Christ liveth in Me*'?

Special Point.

'The Crown of the Priestly Life': '*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in*

the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy.' St. Paul constantly looked forward to the day of Christ for himself and for his flock —when they would meet at the foot of the Throne: '*That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*' Being confident of this very thing, '*that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*'

So in his own glorious aspiration and well-grounded confidence in Christ, as the end of his earthly ministry looms into sight, in the epistle of the second captivity shortly before his martyrdom: '*The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.*'

There are three elements in St. Paul's aspiration:

(*a*) The admission of the priest to the Personal Presence of Christ. This, though awful to contemplate, is indeed the crown of the priest's life: '*To see Him as He is.*' '*Now through a glass darkly, but then face to face.*' The sacramental vision (in cloud and mystery) passes into the beatific: '*Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.*' And notice the gradual preparation for that Vision. How shall we look on God's face and live? Our nature must be purified and transformed, and so be fitted gradually for the Vision: '*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*' We must be made like Him, and so shall '*we see Him as He is.*'

(*b*) The admission of his flock to that presence. In the words of St. Paul: '*Are not even ye* (*our crown*) *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?*' St. Paul always

embraces as a necessary element in that joy, in the Great Day, the presence with him of the souls to whom he has ministered: '*Ye are our glory and joy*' at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ—in the great manifestation of the Lord. When he contemplates the glorious Vision those souls are before him. Such is the great incentive to faithfulness in our ministry here: '*That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*' And in yet more sacred words in this very Seventeenth Chapter of St. John: '*Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but,*' *etc.*

Such is our joy in the eternal joy of others—to see one and another to whom we have ministered appear before God. In that sense again, '*Ye are our glory and joy.*'

(*c*) The union before the Throne: '*So shall we ever be with the Lord.*' Our earthly fellowship in the ministry is often broken and imperfect; separations, misunderstandings, imperfections occur (such as the case of St. Paul and St. Barnabas):

> 'O then the glory and the bliss,
> When all that pained or seemed amiss,
> Shall melt with earth and sin away!
> When Saints beneath their Saviour's eye,
> Filled with each other's company,
> Shall spend in love the eternal Day.'
>
> KEBLE.

Then will be union in the perfectness of love—in the fulness of love given and received. So in the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians the picture is realised: faith and hope passing, and love enduring for ever, in the light of the Beatific Vision: '*In Thy Presence is the fulness of joy.*'

And in some faint measure our hearts re-echo the cry, the words, and the prayer of our Divine Lord for His own, and we, too, pray for the souls entrusted to us: '*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.*'

Notes of Addresses given at a Retreat for Clergy at Cuddesdon, October 18-22, 1897.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

We gather together, my brothers, for our Retreat, coming apart into quietness and seclusion that we may *rest awhile* for a little season of spiritual refreshment amid the toils and struggles and sufferings of our outward life and ministry. We come, too, at the bidding of our Lord Himself. It is His voice, the voice of His Spirit, that says to us, '*Come ye yourselves apart*,' that calls us into Retreat.

And so we are gathered together once more in this holy and, to many of us, this familiar and beloved sanctuary, and that not by chance, nor even only according to rule, but, we are sure, by the movement and under the guidance of God the Holy Ghost.

And not only this, not only does He call us, but He invites us to draw near to Himself, to gather round His own sacred Person, that we may hear His counsels and *find rest* to our souls under the shadow of His own Presence daily at the altar: '*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*'

And this thought may suggest to us one or two preparatory considerations as to some of the special purposes and blessings of Retreat.

(*a*) The recollection with which we should enter into that presence: putting aside ordinary interests and cares, preserving silence in the heart and life—outward and inward silence—that we may be untroubled by sounds of distraction and care within, preparing the soul to listen to His voice. We must recollect that all this requires often a moral effort on our part and a genuine exercise of the will: '*I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.*' The spirit of recollection is especially necessary, and will be especially blessed to those who resolutely seek it. '*Be still, then, and know that I am God.*' Be still, and God will make Himself known to us as God—yea, as '*our own God.*'

(*b*) We may expect in Retreat a renewal of spiritual strength. And this we all need; how much, alas! The many outward labours and distractions of our lives dissipate the soul's inner strength. It requires replenishing. We need to sit still by the well of life: '*With Thee is the well of life.*' Or sometimes it happens that we are engaged in a lonely sphere of work, with few interests and little to stir up the life, and we find ourselves in all but a state of stagnation. In both we shall find that '*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wing as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*'

(*c*) We may look for some special counsel for our own priestly life. Our Lord speaks to us not only as disciples, but as priests or apostles, just as of old He gathered the Twelve around Him. He speaks to us also individually. He has a message, or counsel, or a warning in reference

to some special need or difficulty of our own individual priestly life: '*When they were alone He expounded all things to His disciples.*'

So much by way of preparation for the Retreat. The special subject I propose to take for our meditation is this: the picture of our Lord's priesthood as presented to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We will consider this under a twofold aspect, as being (1) the type and pattern of our own priesthood; (2) as the power, the indwelling and enabling power, of that priesthood.

I propose, further, to arrange this under three main heads, and to consider one division in each day of the Retreat.

1. Some aspects of the priestly character.
2. Some forms of the personal consecration to the Office.
3. Some features of the Office itself.

May I ask you, my brothers, to help me with your prayers, to join your own prayers with mine, that the spirit of the Lord God may be upon us at this time, that He may (1) assure us of our mission as His priests; (2) that He may renew in us the unction from on high—His own Divine anointing; (3) that He may stir up in us the threefold gift—the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. May He, dwelling amongst us, refresh us abundantly with the fulness of His grace, and so '*He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool, even as the drops which water the earth.*'

Address I.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AS THE TYPE AND POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.

'*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*' (Heb. iii. 1).

Let us now consider the call or vocation to the priesthood as set forth in Heb. v. 5, 6: '*So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*'

It is always well, my brothers, to go back in thought as we begin a Retreat to our call or vocation, and so trace, in retrospect, our priesthood from its very source, through the various channels along which it has passed to its present sphere of work or ministry. (1) Take the words of the Ordinal, 'Do you think in your heart, that you are truly *called* according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?' (2) How far have we realised, or are we realising this call as the real groundwork and origin and power of our Ministry? (3) Have we risen, or are we rising, to the greatness of this call, in its power, its opportunities, and its responsibilities? Let us set ourselves in this first meditation to consider together such questions as these.

I. And first, in the matter of vocation, the writer of the Epistle points emphatically to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. v. 5): '*So also Christ*,' etc. The same

law of vocation holds throughout, in all stages of Divine revelation. It was so with the Aaronic priesthood: '*No man taketh this honour, unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*' So, to go back further with the more mysterious and more universal priesthood of Melchisedec. He appears upon the scene of revelation, indeed, only dimly and in mystery, but all that is revealed to us of his unique personality points to a supernatural origin and a supernatural call. How emphatic, *e.g.*, are those words in which he is introduced to us in the early records of the Book of Genesis: '*And he was the priest of the most high God.*' In the same manner, following the same law of vocation, our blessed Lord glorifies not Himself by the assumption of the office and title of the Priesthood. He, too, waits for the Divine call, and then goes forth in the power of the Spirit to fulfil his appointed Ministry: '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*' '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*'

II. But to pursue our meditation a little more in detail on the lines of the passage before us. The writer of the Epistle grounds, as you will observe, the priestly vocation of our Lord on two passages from the Book of Psalms. First, Ps. ii. 7. This passage dwells generally upon the Sonship of Christ: '*Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.*' And the second, from Ps. cx. 4, upon His special Office as a Priest: '*Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*' (*a*) Our Lord is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and exalted to the Throne of God in His glorified Human Nature; and (*b*) there within the Veil in the eternal temple, Son of Man as well as Son of God, in virtue of that perfect Humanity, He is by the call of God our great High Priest. And thus

in the second of the two passages you observe the Sonship passes into the Priesthood, or, to speak more accurately, that special Office of the Sonship which He fulfils at the right hand of God is particularly designated as the Office of His perpetual Priesthood: '*Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*' Thus far for the groundwork or outline of our meditation.

Special Points.

I. (*a*) Our priesthood as part of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. He the one eternal, ever-abiding Priest, we the earthly representatives of His heavenly Priesthood: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*'

(*b*) The grace and power of His Priesthood rests on us: '*He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*'

(*c*) The offering of the Sacrifice in heaven and on earth. (1) He offers Himself before the Father; (2) His priests offer His Body and Blood before God. In both cases it is the same Offering, because it is the same Priesthood: '*The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*'

(*d*) So, too, His call is our call. We partake of His sacred vocation to the priesthood (1) on our ordination day when called to our blessed and holy Office: '*This day have I begotten Thee.*' (2) Our indelible priesthood part of His perpetual Priesthood: '*Thou art a Priest for ever.*'

II. The responsibility of such a vocation. Our Lord God has laid His hand upon us; He has touched our lips with the live coal from the altar; He has given us His commission, '*Feed My sheep;*' He has ordained us His

prophets and teachers unto the people. (*a*) What are we doing with the gifts and powers of this calling, with the powers of the Holy Ghost communicated to us? (*b*) Has there ever been a time in our life when we have desecrated them? By unholiness in secret, by defiling the temple of God the Holy Ghost through sins of the flesh or spirit, or by inconsistency and worldliness of life? '*As He Which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.*' (*c*) Indifference or forgetfulness. Can I recall times when my life has been idle, when I have wasted it, or when there has perhaps been nothing really evil in the life, but, alas! nothing either really good—when ease, and comfort, and personal gratification and selfishness were characteristic of it? It was to the Apostles that the warning was given concerning him who had made no use of his gifts: '*O thou slothful servant.*' There is an especial danger lest the evil of slothfulness be growing upon us, undermining all: '*Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.*' (*d*) Stirring up the gift. By due use of the Ember seasons, personal devotion, devout Communion, continued Eucharists: '*Stir up the gift that is in thee*,' and the reward will follow: '*Well done, good and faithful servant.*'

III. Consider the consolations of the call. The Lord has called me, and whatever He calls us to do He enables us to fulfil. (*a*) In the special difficulties of our ministry let us fall back upon the thought of our call: '*My grace is sufficient for thee.*' '*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*' (*b*) In discontent with our surroundings. It is enough: He has called me to this post, this special work. It would be faithless to give up. I am here not to seek my own pleasure, but to yield myself to His call, and to occupy myself about His work: '*For even Christ pleased*

not Himself.' Shall I give up? No; not except He call me to some other sphere. '*Wait upon the Lord.*' '*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*' '*Blessed are all they that wait for Him.*' (*c*) In want of outward success. Outward failure is often the greatest spiritual success. It is not our work, but His, and we may so easily be deceived by merely human, and hence delusive, tokens of success. '*I come*,' not to succeed, but '*to do Thy will, O God: I am content to do it.*' I come '*to finish His work.*' '*Not My will, but Thine be done.*'

'*I have sworn and am stedfastly purposed to keep Thy righteous judgments.*' '*The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*' '*O, quicken me after Thy loving-kindness; and so shall I keep the testimonies of Thy mouth.*'

Address II.

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRIEST.

From the call we pass naturally to the life or character, which is its legitimate development. And we shall find this traced in the case of our Lord in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as manifested and perfected in Christ, our great High Priest. The writer in more than one passage dwells upon this feature of the perfect Priesthood of our Lord, the sinless perfection of His human life. It is touched upon, (*a*) as part of the discipline of His Humanity: '*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered: and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that*

obey Him.' (*b*) In reference to His human sympathy: '*For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*' (*c*) And once more in a yet more detailed description of His perfect character with special allusion to its perfection in every relation of the life, whether to Himself or to man or to God, which is given us in Heb. vii. 26: '*Such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled.*'

This, then, is the subject of our meditation. Let us gather out some of the points it suggests to us, by way either of reflection or self-inquiry.

Special Points.

I. The priest's life the development of his call. How fruitful this in the topics and questions it suggests!

(*a*) Has our priestly life, as we look back upon it, been the due development of our holy vocation? Sometimes, thanks be to God, it is so! We have gone *from strength to strength*, growing more perfect at each stage, putting forth more spiritual energy in the service of our Lord, in each succeeding sphere of our ministry becoming more devoted, more personally holy, more entirely self-surrendered, and thus making, as the years have advanced, fuller and fuller proof of the gifts that are in us, of the powers of the Holy Ghost committed to us in the day of our calling to the priesthood. Has it been so with us? If so, give thanks and glory to God, '*Who has made us able ministers of the New Testament: not of the letter, but of the spirit.*'

(*b*) But this we feel not always. We have to confess our times of decadence or relapse through the power of sin—

times from which it is so hard to recover, or periods of coldness and deadness through worldly influences so subtle and perilous, or seasons of discontent or of restlessness and self-seeking. Is it thus with any of us at present? Let us remember for our warning that such are times when the enemy is almost certain to have the advantage over us, for we have consciously or unconsciously fallen away from the standard and example of the Life and Character of our great High Priest, '*Jesus, the Son of God*,' Who said of Himself: '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*' '*I seek not Mine own glory.*' '*I have glorified Thee on the earth.*' '*The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.*' Thus Jesus, our High Priest. And we, His priests, must follow in His steps: the conditions of our lives, the character and motives of our work, must run parallel with His: '*As He is, so are we in this world.*' '*I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*'

II. But, again, to pursue our spiritual self-inquiry yet a little deeper. Take as our method of self-examination the points or relations of priestly character suggested by the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews above quoted. The High Priest as (*a*) holy, (*b*) harmless, (*c*) undefiled. How far has the life of our priesthood moved and advanced on the lines here laid down? Have we sought to realise in our spiritual experience the three characteristics of the life of the priest here noted: (*a*) ὅσιος, (*b*) ἄκακος, (*c*) ἀμίαντος.

We may review our priesthood in these *three* relations:

(*a*) Holy in relation to self.

(*b*) Harmless in relation to others.

(*c*) Undefiled in relation to God.

(*a*) Personal holiness. How all-important! '*Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.*' Sins of the flesh and of the spirit, which desecrate every Christian life, how must they desecrate the life of the priest! '*Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*' Carefulness in little things is ever a great safeguard to personal holiness, which is risked by the indulgence of little faults.

(*b*) Harmlessness in respect of others. This seems at first sight to mean little. To do no harm to others, to be harmless, does not seem to represent any very high standard of Christian or of priestly excellence. (1) But is this so? Bishop Westcott, in his 'Commentary' on the Epistle (*in loc.*), notices: 'He who is ἄκακος embodies Christian love' (1 Cor. xiii. 6 *f.*), and we recollect the words: '*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*' (2) That priest has, indeed, attained to a high eminence of life who has never, in word or deed, by his example or his teaching, by his influence, voluntary or involuntary, harmed another's soul, but has uniformly trained, and taught, and influenced for eternal life the souls committed to his charge! This, surely, is the very fulfilling of the law of Christian life: '*They that turn many to righteousness* (*shall shine*) *as the stars for ever and ever.*' It is well, my brothers, in Retreat to examine the effects of our influence upon others.

(*c*) Undefiled in his relation to God. The whole nature, being more and more purified, till it is made more and more one with the Being of God. (1) The affection or the emotional part of our nature restrained and consecrated. So much depends on this: the command of our feelings and impulses. (2) The understanding enlightened

in the discernment of spiritual mysteries, and given to the study of these mysteries. (3) The will, more and more absolutely conformed to the Divine Will: 'The strong will bound by one stronger than itself.' Like His, who in the great crisis of the Offering of Himself a Sacrifice for sin, summed up the perfect obedience of His life in the never-to-be-forgotten words: '*Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.*'

May we set this standard before ourselves as absolutely indispensable for the due carrying on of our priesthood in union with His—that we, too, must aim at being ὅσιος, ἄκακος, ἀμίαντος. So that we also may in our turn be able humbly to re-echo the words of the Psalmist: '*In the volume of the Book it is written of Me that I should fulfil Thy will, O my God; I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within My heart.*'

Address III.

THE SYMPATHY OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

We come now to dwell upon a feature in the Priestly Character of our Lord on which special stress is laid by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews—viz., the perfectness of our Lord's human sympathy as our High Priest. Call to mind the passage (Heb. iv. 15): '*We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*' (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας). And this passage falls back upon an earlier one which represents, at once, the sympathy of our Lord, and also the ground-work of that perfect sympathy in the Incarnation (see

Heb. ii. 17, 18): '*In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*' And then as Incarnate, as having taken upon Himself human nature in its entirety (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας), He is capable, He is qualified by virtue of His own Humanity, to succour the tried and tempted sons of men, and by virtue of His own experience of suffering and temptation, to bear their griefs and carry their sorrows: '*For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.*'

Notice, then, here two points:

I. The very close association of sympathy and priesthood. This thought is drawn out for us in the beginning of Chapter V.—sympathy, the great qualification of the human priesthood: Every priest '*taken from among men*' is one '*who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*' So our Blessed Lord was '*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*,' and so qualified to have compassion upon us.

II. The Incarnation, the real ground-work both of the priesthood and the sympathy.

(*a*) Christ as the Son of Man, in virtue of His Human Nature added to the Divine, mediates between God and man as Priest, and offers to God propitiation for human sin.

(*b*) It is also through the perfectness of that Human Nature that He sympathises with us—our Brother Man, '*Tempted*' (tried) '*in all points like as we are*,' embracing in the fulness of his own experience all forms of human trials and sufferings (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας): '*In all things it*

behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.'

Let us pass on from these general considerations to some thoughts for special meditation.

Special Point: The Elements of True Priestly Sympathy.

For the influence of our priesthood, like that of Christ's, rests mainly upon the thoroughness of our sympathy.

I. Personal experience of trial and temptation. This pre-eminently in our Lord's case: '*In all points tempted, like as we are.*' '*In that He hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.*'

(*a*) The force of some temptation—revealing to us, making us aware of, the power of sin. (*b*) Enabling us to feel for the fallen. (*c*) Temptation, such a curse, such a misery, such a humiliation, yet, if endured, such a blessing, has this recompense: that it strengthens and perfects our own characters, and also deepens our sympathy with others' lives: '*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.*'

II. So also with the experience of sorrow: (*a*) This opens out for us and reveals the sorrows of other hearts—an image and reflection of their sorrow in our own hearts—and enables us to '*weep with them that weep.*' (*b*) It creates also an abiding tenderness—makes us tender to all sufferers. So with our Lord: it was because He was Himself '*a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief*' that He was able to '*bear our sins and carry our sorrows.*'

Let us remember that the power of sympathy lies not in the mere capacity for feeling, but in the lessons and fellowship of experience.

III. Sinlessness of life.

(*a*) The idea is a delusive one that to sympathise with sinners you must be a sinner. (*b*) On the contrary, it is the sinless only, it is in proportion as we ourselves are pure that we realise the hatefulness and bitterness of sin, and so feel more intensely for the sinner. 'Sin, indeed, dulls sympathy by obscuring the idea of evil.' (*c*) *E.g.*, in penitentiary work. What is the real power that moves the fallen soul? Not merely soft, indiscriminating sympathy with its misery, but the blending with the sympathy an utter abhorrence of the sin, a combination of purity and sinlessness, with tenderness for the sinner: touched with the feeling of infirmities, yet without (or apart from) sin.

IV. Care for the individual sufferer.

(*a*) This was especially characteristic of our Lord's sympathy—its touch of the individual life and of the separate forces of suffering in each. As He experienced suffering in all its forms, so He was able to enter into the sufferings of each one. The widow at Nain, the bereaved at Bethany, the perplexed doubter Nicodemus, the case of the woman 'that was a sinner.' So in proportion as we, His priests, are permitted to realise in our own experience the various forms of sorrow and distress, bodily or mental, of temptation, are we qualified to deal with the special suffering of the individual soul.

(*b*) How great is the importance of this individual ministry—the priest in counsel, the priest in confession! How we require here the Spirit of Christ in His power and love, in experience, in sinlessness, in individual power!

'*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the* LORD *hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the* LORD, *and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.*' '*He healeth those that are broken in heart: and giveth medicine to heal their sickness.*'

Address IV.

THE DISCIPLINE OF TEMPTATION.

IN our last meditation we touched when dwelling on the sympathy of the priest, upon the power of temptation and the experience of sorrow in the development of this sympathy.

Let us now enter, my brothers, yet a little deeper into these mysteries of temptation and sorrow, and seek to trace in them some of the lineaments and characteristics of our own personal consecration to the Office of the Christian priesthood. Our subjects for the three following meditations will be the discipline of temptation, the discipline of obedience, and the discipline of suffering.

The Discipline of Temptation.

Call to mind the passage already quoted from Heb. ii. 18: '*In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.*'

I. The writer, you observe, dwells upon the discipline of

temptation in our Lord's own case and upon the power to succour others, which, as Man, He gained by His own human experience. Hence it is that in the Gospel narrative our Lord's Temptation in the Wilderness immediately precedes His active Ministry: '*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*' He was fitted or qualified in respect of His Human Nature to enter into and to cope with the temptations of men, by His own successful conflict with the tempter; and to succour those who were tempted with evil in its various forms, by His own sinless experience of the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Thus equipped or qualified, our Lord went forth from the Wilderness of the Temptation to fulfil His earthly Ministry among men, Himself having suffered temptation, being thenceforth able by His experience of temptation to succour them that are tempted.

II. It is interesting, further, to notice our Lord's own preparation for temptation. If His Temptation and its experience preceded His active Ministry, not less true is it that His fast of forty days and its discipline preceded the temptation. As the Son of Man He trained Himself for the conflict; He disciplined Himself in those forms of self-control which gave Him power over all temptation: (*a*) He controlled the appetite of the flesh; (*b*) He resisted the allurements of the world; (*c*) He trod under foot the pride of self. And then He met in the power of a perfectly disciplined Humanity all the assaults of the tempter, and overcame as the Son of Man, as our Representative, alike in experience, in discipline, and in victory: '*In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*'

Special Point: The Temptations of the Priest.

I. The burden of the temptations of others besides his own. In this the priest is made like unto his Lord. This is a great mystery: (1) The priest has his own personal temptations, but (2) as part of the union with his Lord in his priesthood he has besides to enter into and to bear the burden of the temptations of others.

(*a*) The experience of temptation in himself enables him to understand the power of temptation in others, and he can say to himself: If I with all the help afforded me am so tempted, what must be the case with the ignorant and the wanderer, and those without help?

(*b*) The participation in the burden of the temptations of others brings him into a mysterious fellowship with Christ and into a realisation of that Sacrifice of Himself which consisted in the bearing of the griefs and carrying the sorrows of others, a voluntary endurance of pain and struggle for others' sakes: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*' '*The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.*'

II. The peril of this burden. Let us note this, for we are not, as our Lord was, free from the propensities of an evil nature.

(*a*) There are some forms of temptation especially dangerous to us: and not only do we bear the burden, but we run the risk, and incur the peril of being ourselves tempted and of being overcome. What a snare, what ruin to many a priest has been this contact with evil in others! Remember St. Paul's words: '*I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway.*'

(*b*) How great is the need of special watchfulness, on ac-

count of the sinful nature in us, which at times finds allurement in the sin of others! Our Lord alone was without sin, not we! '*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*'

(*c*) The necessity of watchfulness and prayer. The priest can never venture into the temptations of others safely unless he is constantly on his guard—unless he seeks day by day in prayer the strength of Christ. Always let us make it a rule to pray before entering into others' temptations or into any contact with sin, whether in giving counsel, or in hearing confessions: '*Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*'

III. The great safeguard, as our blessed Lord teaches by His own example, is self-discipline and self-control. This is the great lesson of His mysterious Fast. Our power over temptation in ourselves and others depends, on its human side, on the thoroughness of our habitual self-control. '*Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate* (ἐγκρατεύεται) *in all things.*'

(*a*) Victory over temptation is won, not so much through efforts at the time, as in the power of abiding self-control —the constant attitude of watchfulness. And so, with any special and clinging temptation, let us be careful not to entangle ourselves with it, but to control the whole man.

(*b*) Rules of self-discipline are so all-important, especially in the English Church, where the discipline is left only too much to ourselves. (1) The fast-days of the Church should be a reality, as a means of disciplining the flesh. (2) The allurements of the world in amusement and recreation—*e.g.*, smoking, going to theatres, taking part in games—have a tendency to lower the spiritual tone in ourselves, and to become a stumbling-block to others, especially the more earnest and spiritual members of our

flocks: '*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.*' '*Let him deny himself.*' (3) The solicitations of pride, are especially temptations of the devil. How necessary here for the priest is the restraint of thought and imagination; the special restraint in the temptations which arise from popularity, the seeking the praise of men, from ambition, or from dissatisfaction with work committed to us: '*He made Himself of no reputation.*' '*He humbled Himself.*'

In all these difficulties—and they are real difficulties to many—let us look up and seek God's aid; and, conscious of our many, many sins and failures, pray yet again the old words: '*O give me the comfort of Thy help again: and stablish me with Thy free Spirit.*'

Address V.

THE DISCIPLINE OF OBEDIENCE.

We pass on further to another means of consecration for our priestly office—the discipline of obedience. This, you will recollect, my brothers, is described by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews as an element in the human fitness of our Lord for His Priesthood: '*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.*' This is noticeable. The words occur in the same chapter in which the writer alludes to our Lord's call to the priesthood, and he immediately proceeds to speak of His Human Obedience—of that discipline of toil and suffering through which He attained, as the Son of Man, perfect conformity with the will of God. Notice,

then, in reference to this passage, one or two important points.

I. Obedience to the Father's will, the great cardinal principle of our Lord's human life throughout His earthly ministry. (*a*) Its beginning and purpose: '*I come to do Thy will, O God.*' (*b*) Its course and power: '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.*' (*c*) Its consummation, in the great agony and the climax of His perfected obedience: '*Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done.*'

II. This obedience gradually perfected in His Human Life. He *learned* it: '*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*' As Bishop Westcott puts it in his comment upon this verse (Heb. v. 8): 'The Lord's Manhood was (negatively) sinless, and (positively) perfect—that is, perfect relatively at every stage—and therefore He truly advanced by learning (St. Luke ii. 52; 40, πληρούμενον), while the powers of His Human Nature grew step by step in a perfect union with the Divine in His One Person.'

There is always, of course, a difficulty with our present mental powers in reconciling the Human and Divine in our Lord's Person. The danger in the past was to ignore the really human element in His Person, while the tendency in the present day is not so much to exaggerate the Human at the expense of the Divine, as to attempt impossible definitions of the relations between the two. This is undoubtedly the danger of modern theology, and it is parallel with the attempt to define, and even to describe, the method of our Lord's Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, and, in its way, parallel to the medieval attempt at definition which resulted in the untenable theory of Transubstantiation.

Special Point.

I. The will of God the law of the priest's life.

Let us think over this for a moment or two: '*My meat is to do the will of God, and to finish His work.*'

(*a*) In the very vocation. (1) How thankful should we be that in these later years, since the great Oxford movement, the solemnity of the priestly office has been increasingly realised! (2) There is all the difference in the world between a merely honourable, useful, respectable profession and the very calling of God. The view of the life is changed, the motives of the work are raised, and a stamp, a bent, a power, a Divine direction is given to the whole ministry when we realise that we have received our call and mission from God, and that our whole life is to be one sustained act of obedience to that call. Oh that day by day, at each step, in every work, and in every act of ministry those words of the Master, with all that they involve of power, of dignity, of gifts of the Holy Ghost, may be present to our minds: '*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*' They will remind us of the truth of the words of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: '*No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God.*'

(*b*) In the special sphere of work assigned to us. So, too, here, not only has our Lord chosen—called us to the priesthood—He has ordained and placed us in our special position; so that great care, much prayer, is necessary before making a change, and then, perhaps, finding ourselves face to face with unthought-of responsibilities. Let us at such times beware of following our own choice; let us see that nothing is done to interfere with the will of God: '*Be it*

unto me according to Thy word.' '*Not My will, but Thine be done.*'

(*c*) In all the outward vicissitudes of this life. In success, in failure, in unpopularity, under praise of men, in reproach or esteem—all these must be secondary considerations in the life of the true priest. The essence of the life and work is the fulfilment of the Divine will: '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.*' These various conditions of the life are not without their value and purpose; but they are not to be looked at in themselves, save as so many opportunities of fulfilling the Divine purpose, sometimes by one, sometimes by another. We have not to ask ourselves, Am I honoured? or, Am I despised? but, Is the work of the Lord fulfilled '*by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report*'? So when life closes in and the ministry is ended, our joy and our satisfaction will be—not, I have succeeded or I have failed, but '*I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.*' This, dear brothers, can only be *then* for each one of us, if *now* we make the words of the Psalmist the expression of our whole lives: '*The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me: than thousands of gold and silver.*'

Address VI.

THE DISCIPLINE OF SUFFERING.

Let us pass on to the consideration of one other element in our personal consecration for the priestly office—from the discipline of temptation, and the discipline of obedience, to the discipline of suffering.

I. This discipline of suffering occupies a very prominent place throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, in our Lord's human discipline and especially with reference to His Priesthood. Notice some references to this. In Chapter ii. 'suffering' is spoken of as one great feature in the Incarnate life, as the discipline of Christ's perfection, and still further as the mysterious condition of His victory over '*the suffering of death*,' and of His own entrance into the glory of His kingdom. Thus in Chapter ii. 10: He is said to be made '*perfect through sufferings*,' and again, in ii. 14: '*that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil*,' and thus, as Conqueror, to be '*crowned with glory and honour*.' And, further, this mystery of suffering is brought into special connection with that particular office of His Incarnate life, His Priesthood: '*In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest*.' And more even than this: the same mystery of suffering runs through both 'the discipline of His temptation' and 'the discipline of His obedience' as a pervading and essential element in all the discipline of His Humanity. So we read: '*He hath suffered being tempted*'—He knew, that is, not only tempation, but the suffering of being tempted. And again: '*He learned obedience by the things which He suffered*.' He not only obeyed, but He submitted to suffering as the discipline of His obedience; so that suffering pervades the whole Human Life of our Lord in all its manifold experiences as the unifying principle of all, justifying and interpreting His great prophetic title: '*A Man of Sorrows*.' And it becomes, as we have seen, the ground of that human compassion which is the great requisite and characteristic of all true priesthood: '*Who can have compassion on the*

ignorant and them that are out of the way.' '*Touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*' '*In all points tempted like as we are.*' And thus He rises to the qualifications and to the dignity of His Priesthood: '*Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.*' '*Thou art a Priest for ever.*'

II. One other point. As you will recollect in the closing chapters of the Epistle, the writer recurs to the same subject. He comforts the Hebrew Christians, whose faith was at that time sorely tried, by recalling to their minds the great humiliation and sufferings of Jesus, their High Priest, and how He had passed through suffering to the '*joy set before Him*,' and was now set down at the Right Hand of God. This being so, they might well '*run with patience the race set before*' them. They might endure gladly the chastenings of the present time; they might realise hopefully the fruit and issue of all they suffered, '*the peaceable fruit of righteousness*,' which followed upon the chastisement of suffering, if they would look '*unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.*'

III. There is much, my brothers, for us to reflect upon as we call to mind this discipline of suffering in our great High Priest: how directly it bears upon our own priesthood; how it leads us on to the very sources of faithfulness and of power in our own high calling as priests of His Church in union with Himself. One issue of that discipline has been already alluded to in Address VI.—the power of suffering rendering us able to sympathise with those that suffer—but there are other, and even deeper, and more personal fruits of suffering in the ex-

periences of the priestly life. Let us glance at some of these as we meditate together on this deeply interesting subject.

Special Point: The Priest's need of Perfect Obedience.

I. That which is the aim and end of a priest's life:—how to attain more perfect obedience to the will of God. We learn not only sympathy, but also obedience or conformity of will, by the things which we suffer. So it was with our Lord: '*He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*' But we sometimes find great difficulty in fully conforming ourselves to God's will. Even our Lord Himself, when tested in the supreme crisis, felt the almost overpowering strain, and cried: '*If it be possible let this Cup pass from Me,*' but recovered Himself with the majestic words: '*Not My will but Thine be done.*' How much more we!—sometimes in the daily frettings of our own restless wills; sometimes under the heavy pressure of some special trial which seems to us a burden greater than can be borne. Are we, then, conforming ourselves to that Divine Will, or, at all events, *growing* in conformity? or are we only too conscious of secret chafings against that Will, or, it may be, of direct opposition to it? We must try to welcome suffering as our teacher in obedience; as the means whereby we learn to practise conformity to God's Will; and in realising the purpose of the divinely-sent chastisement, bearing it patiently and trustfully, we shall, like our blessed Lord Himself, learn to say: '*Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.*' And thus there will be a purifying and elevating of the motives, a seeking of God's Will instead of our own, which is the highest aim of our priesthood and makes it most like our Lord's;

but this can only be attained by the obedience of the will: '*That Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.*' '*I delight to do Thy will, O, My God!*'

II. The power of the Cross in the priest's life, its influence upon his own people when borne bravely, patiently, trustfully, joyfully: '*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.*' '*Christ liveth in me.*' The power of patience is often greater than the power of activity, and great consolation may be found in weakness, in depression, in failing active energy. Our Lord's power was great, indeed, in His active Ministry, in the words such as '*never man spake*,' in the '*works which no other man did*,' but even greater in His Passion. It was His demeanour under suffering more than His wonderful works that made even the heathen Governor, Pilate, marvel ('*so that Pilate marvelled*'). It was when on the Cross and in the uttermost anguish of His Passion, as He submitted Himself wholly unto God that He drew forth from the amazed Centurion: '*Truly this Man was the Son of God.*'

III. The realisation of the future joy of the priest, as in the case of our Lord: '*Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.*' There is often some difficulty in the presence of daily duties, in casting the mind forward into the future. The mind's horizon is, as a rule, too limited. We look at the things that are seen and forget too often that these things are only temporal. Consequently there is a need of habitual meditation in a priest's life to keep the unseen steadily before him, and as a counterpoise to the distraction of outward things: '*Lord, what love have I unto Thy law? all the day long is my study in it.*' Think of the joy of the future to the faithful priest in the souls

saved through God's blessing on his ministry, his work accepted as having been for God's glory! What a welcome for him: '*Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*'

Address VII.

THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE.

In connection with our subject we will take for our subsequent meditations three of the main features of the priestly Office. They all find their expression in this Epistle, and they all derive their pattern and gather their force and power direct from the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest.

I. The sacrifice of self. We are bidden to contemplate Him who '*offered Himself without spot*' to God, and '*Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*'

II. The ministry of intercession. Our thoughts are also directed to Him, who in the eternal sanctuary and in the power of His unchangeable priesthood '*ever liveth to make intercession*' for His Church.

III. The shepherding of the flock. Once more, in the closing words of the Epistle and in its final benediction, our Lord Jesus Christ is set before us as '*that great Shepherd of the sheep,*' ever guarding and feeding His own flock, which He has purchased to Himself with '*the blood of the everlasting covenant,*' and guiding them through all vicissitudes of time, through all their sojourn in the wilderness, here upon earth till reaching the eternal Fold on High, they pass, '*under the hands of Him that telleth them, through the gates into the city.*'

Let us now take the first feature, The Sacrifice of Self, and here at the outset observe two points.

(*a*) Our Lord Jesus Christ—the great Example and Pattern of self-sacrifice—in His Office as Priest '*offered Himself*.' He is Himself the Sacrifice as well as the Priest. We, as His representatives, are called after His example to offer the Sacrifice as priests, and then also in our measure to sacrifice ourselves; for, as He Himself declares in the great act of humiliation which inaugurated the Sacrifice of His Cross, '*I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*'

(*b*) Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Example, but by virtue of His Life in us, He is the very Power of self-sacrifice in our lives. He imparts the enabling power, by which we may live as He lived, and present ourselves a sacrifice to God, even as He '*offered Himself*' to God. So St. Paul speaks of himself as being a very partaker of the sacrifice and of the life of Christ: '*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*' And further, as you will recollect, the Apostle enlarges upon the unlimited power of this indwelling life: '*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth*' (enableth) '*me.*' And yet, once more, when speaking of the powers and responsibilities of the apostolic ministry, he returns to this subject of the sacrifice and the life of Christ in His priests as the great testimony of the reality of their priesthood, speaking of them as those who bear '*about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.*'

Special Points.

I. Let us have always before us the great example of Christ's self-sacrifice. Impress it, imprint it, burn it into our hearts, and minds, and lives: '*Consider*' (be always considering) '*the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*' *Consider*—the word enjoins continuous observation and regard, and implies the necessity of regular meditation. The example fades if our meditation is fitful and irregular. It needs constant meditation to keep before the mind's eye the picture of the self-sacrifice of Christ: '*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*' Daily meditation is possible in the busiest life by proper care and arrangement. Busy distraction need not hinder it: '*Lord, what love have I unto Thy law? all the day long is my study in it.*'

II. Consider Christ not only as the Example, but as the Life of our priesthood. (*a*) The natural power of a great moral example is found in our Lord's life; but this is not all, nor the chief. Still more important is it for us to recognise the supernatural life of Christ working in us, and upon the souls to whom we minister. Love, sacrifice, sympathy being raised into the supernatural order, the power of the life of Christ: '*Christ liveth in me*'; for the power of Example will in time fade away if it is not sustained and animated by the power of the Life. The advocates of a religion of a pure humanity always forget or ignore the fact that the sacrifice, and the self-denial, and the sympathy, and the common brotherhood which they exalt are essentially and originally elements of the Life of Christ, and will only live on and abide in the power of that Life: '*Christ liveth in me.*' This is the great, the essential, the ever-abiding power of our priesthood.

III. The Sacrament of Communion the great channel of this Life. Through this channel the Divine Life flows out from the Person of Christ into us: '*Abide in Me, and I in you.*' '*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him.*' Hence the importance to the priest of the daily Eucharist. In this matter no doubt there are many difficulties, but they may be overcome. We never realise till we experience it as a fact the power of the supernatural Life thus imparted to us; how Christ may indeed live in us, imparting to us His own love, His own purity, His own sympathy, His own strength, His own wisdom, raising all our natural powers and efforts into the supernatural order, guiding, transforming, elevating all those natural gifts by the power of His own Spirit till it is no more we *that live*, but *Christ Who liveth in* us; no more we *that speak, but the Holy Ghost:* His own life *made manifest in our body;* Christ in us, the Power, the Comfort, the mighty Influence, the unfailing Joy of our lives. Let us so far as possible make our daily Eucharist a reality; let it not become to us a mere matter of custom, for here we shall indeed find it true: '*The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear? the Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?*'

Address VIII.

THE PERPETUAL INTERCESSION OF THE PRIEST.

We go on to consider another feature of the priestly office upon which stress is laid in the Epistle to the Hebrews—viz., The Perpetual Intercession of the priest.

I. You will recollect how the writer more than once alludes to this as a great feature of our Lord's Priesthood —its intercessory character. (*a*) In one important passage touching upon our Lord's ascension into the heavens he speaks of His advocacy or of His intercession for us as one great purpose of His return to the Father: '*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*' (*b*) In another passage he describes the intercession of our Lord as the perpetual and unchanging work of His Priesthood in heaven; His life on high is a constant pleading on behalf of those who draw nigh to God by Him: '*He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*'

II. It is interesting to follow up in the Gospel narrative the traces of our Lord's intercession even in the days of His earthly Ministry. (*a*) Those long nights in prayer on the mountain before the choice of the Twelve. (*b*) Intercession for individuals, as in the case of St. Peter: '*I have prayed for thee.*' (*c*) For the whole Church, as in the great High-Priestly Prayer, which at the close of His earthly Ministry sums up the constant intercessions of His daily life. '*I pray for them . . . those whom Thou hast given Me.* Or again: '*I pray . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*' (*d*) Nor can we forget that on the Cross, where indeed His High-Priestly Office is specially inaugurated in the great Sacrifice, His first utterance is an utterance of intercession for sinners, begun on earth to be continued for ever within the Veil: '*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*'

III. How much does this great feature of our Lord's Priestly Office suggest to us as His priests? Let us draw out some of its suggestions.

(*a*) Intercession in the priestly life is one token of the life of Christ in us, and of our union with His Life; so, if we live in Him, must we be constant in intercession. (2) By neglecting intercession, or becoming irregular in it, our life drops out of union with His Life; for intercession, like self-sacrifice, is not only a feature of our Lord's example, it is also a very part of His Life in us. The priest who does not intercede is letting his own life drift away from Christ; his life is losing its harmony with Christ's Life. For if Aaron of old bore on his breastplate '*before the Lord continually*' the names of the Children of Israel, how much more the Christian priest, in union with the great High Priest '*Who ever liveth to make intercession*,' should bear upon his heart the souls committed to his charge and make mention of them in his prayers. So St. Paul writes to St. Timothy: '*I exhort, therefore, that prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*'

(*b*) The intercessory element in our daily Offices, and especially in the Holy Eucharist. We can realise this even in our thinly attended Matins and Evensong. We are praying for our people, we are joining with the great High Priest, '*Who ever liveth to make intercession.*' We can make this a great feature in our daily Eucharists. Whether there be many or few present, we are offering up the great Sacrifice, pleading the virtues of the Passion for the souls committed to our care; uniting ourselves with the Lord, when He offers Himself in the Presence of God and pleads as *the Lamb slain* the power of His Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

(*c*) How real is the comfort of intercession at such times for individual souls—for some great sinner whom we fail to touch; for some fallen soul; for some troubled

and desolate heart; for the young in their various needs and temptations; for the tempted; for the dying; for the souls just passing out of the world. '*I have prayed for thee.*' That prayer shall be answered though we know it not. We shall know it in That Day, when we stand before the Throne and meet that soul for whom we have prayed, in the presence of God: '*Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*'

IV. Private intercession. This is equally necessary, for without it public intercession will grow formal and mechanical; moreover, public intercession is quickened into life and reality by private intercession offered with real earnestness. I have found it in a now tolerably lengthened ministry of more than forty years a helpful plan to devote the closing devotions of every Friday night to intercession for the souls committed to my care. It is of great help to have a regular stated time for intercession: '*In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday will I pray, and that instantly, and He shall hear my voice.*' Yes; like St. Paul, let us pray night and day, without ceasing, making mention of such souls in our prayers before God: '*Hear the voice of my humble petitions cry unto Thee; when I hold up my hands towards the mercy-seat of Thy holy temple*'; '*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; grant thee thy heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind. . . . Save, Lord, and hear us, O King of heaven, when we call upon Thee.*'

Address IX.

THE SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK.

THERE remains one other great feature of the priestly office indicated in the Epistle upon which we may dwell—The Priest as the Shepherd of his Flock.

I. The writer of the Epistle in his last Chapter seems to sum up under this title the various offices of our Lord's High Priesthood—'*Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep*'—and we may close the meditations of our Retreat by considering together this comprehensive title which embraces, as in a summary, the various elements and functions of our priestly life. For the priest is the shepherd of his flock: (*a*) giving his life in sacrifice for the sheep; (*b*) in the constancy of his watchful care and in perpetual intercession for his people; (*c*) in the feeding of the flock with the Word of Truth and with the Bread of Life.

'Pastor est,' says Herveius, speaking of our Lord, 'quia totum gregem conservat et pascit. Pascit autem non solum verbo doctrinæ, sed Corpore et Sanguino Suo.'

II. Let us contemplate our Lord Himself under this self-appropriated name, the description He has given us of His own relation to His people—'*I am the Good Shepherd.*' We may trace in those features of His pastoral office to which He Himself draws attention the lineaments and characteristics of our own priesthood, if so be that priesthood is following in His footsteps and is being quickened and animated with His life; if so be also that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, in all His supernatural powers and

inspirations. Let us, by way of summing up the whole subject, gather out some of these characteristics of The '*great Shepherd of the sheep.*'

(*a*) The devotion of life: '*The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.*' Our priesthood must be the dedication and devotion of our whole life. We shall '*henceforth live not unto ourselves, but unto Him Who died for us.*' It is sometimes a question how far a priest should entangle himself '*with the affairs of this life*'—*e.g.*, political interests, magisterial work, ordinary amusements, harmless luxuries of life, smoking, card-playing, etc. The answer to such questions depends partly on the circumstances of life. What may be expedient in one place may not be expedient in another. The great point to be kept in view is this: that the sacred interests of the priesthood must dominate all other interests; everything must be subordinate to these; even things most lawful, most innocent, most useful, must be sacrificed to the one all-imperious claim. There is here, then, a great scope for self-denial: '*Yea, doubtless,*' says St. Paul, '*I count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things.*'

(*b*) The mutual sympathy and recognition: '*I know My sheep, and am known of Mine.*' The priest should always be in touch with his people. He must be many-sided, large-hearted, embracing in his own heart all their varied and manifold interests, their sufferings, their duties, their changing lots and circumstances, till he is one with them and they one with him. Still, there must be great care in the direction of these sympathies, and some natures find it difficult to sympathise; but this can be overcome by grace, and by the Holy Spirit. Even more important is it to see that our sympathies are not merely natural; that they

are the chastened, self-restrained, self-sacrificing sympathies of the Spirit, the development in us of the gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost, raised to the supernatural order: '*Not I, but Christ liveth in me.*'

(*c*) The unceasing care for the lost: He goeth '*after that which is lost, until he find it.*' The priest, like the Good Shepherd, must seek for the lost as well as watch over the faithful. This gives significance to all mission work, and to that often most difficult work the visitation of the negligent and lapsed, or those living in deadly sin. '*Stir up the gift that is in thee*'—the inspirations of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost—that we may represent and carry out in our priesthood that great feature in the Ministry of the great High Priest, the seeking of the lost: He goeth '*after that which is lost until he find it.*' We notice two special points: (1) Individual care (the *one* lost sheep); (2) perseverance (*until he find it*). Compare with this the words of God to the shepherds of Israel in Ezek. xxxiv. 16: '*I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.*'

(*d*) The feeding of the flock with the Word of Truth, the Bread of Life—'non solum verbo doctrinæ, sed Corpore et Sanguino Suo.' (1) We shall often find an impatience of teaching and of edification, but our sermons would be much more powerful for good and be of much more permament effect if we always kept distinctly before ourselves this great aim—the instruction of our people in the truth, in the mysteries of the Faith, and the duties of the Christian life; it is not the stirring of feeling, nor the effort to be eloquent and telling, nor even the kindling of the imagination, nor the pleasing of the intellect, that is

all important, but instruction, spiritual instruction, the building up of the spiritual life: '*That they be sound in the faith, taught in the word and doctrine.*' (2) The Bread of Life. This is specially laid upon His priests: '*Feed My lambs; tend My sheep; feed My sheep*' (R.V.). The spiritual nature requires feeding as well as teaching. The Bread of Life is the food of the spiritual nature. The Bread of Life is Christ Himself: '*I am that Bread of Life.*' As all true Christian instruction centres upon the Person of Christ, so all spiritual nourishment is derived from His Person—His own Body and Blood: '*He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.*' We must not only give our people Communion, but teach them to realise what Communion is—the very partaking of Christ Himself, of His Divine Life, of His Divine Nature.

(*e*) Provision for the future. This is a very marked feature in our Lord's work. He looks outward to the future. He lays foundations of a future kingdom. He sows the seed which is to bring forth its fruit hereafter. He contemplates and makes provision for His Church to the end of time. So with His priests. 'What, after I am gone, will be the fruit of my ministry?' So St. Peter: '*That ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.*' 'What impress shall my work leave upon the hearts and minds of the younger generation when they are old?' The moral and spiritual influence of a priest will be lasting on his people, on the district in which he serves, whether in the ritual adopted, the sermons preached, counsel given, confessions heard, the life lived. 'What will be the result of it all when I have passed away?' 'Will it have been to edify, to build up in Christ, to influence permanently the hearts of men, to raise the spiritual tone of society around and to transform the

spiritual life of individuals?' Let us not forget the words of our Lord, '*that Great Shepherd of the sheep*':—'*I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*'

God grant it may be so with us all, my brothers in the priesthood! May He 'so replenish us,' one and all, 'with the truth of His doctrine, and endue us with innocency of life,' that we in our time of ministry may bring forth fruit that shall remain—fruit which shall be found '*unto the praise and honour and glory*' of God '*at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*'

THE END.

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